University of Alberta

English versus Heritage Languages: The Politics of Language in South Asian Canadian Writing

by

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Abstract

In this dissertation, through the study of South Asian Canadian writing, both in English and heritage languages, I discuss the interrelationship of language, literature, culture, and diaspora. Comparative in approach, this project recognizes the value of exploring national literatures from a multicultural, multilingual angle. I demonstrate how the authors employing heritage languages in English writing or how those writing solely in heritage languages deal with the issues related to diaspora, and how by returning to indigenous languages, they restructure attitudes to the local and native cultures.

In chapter one, I establish a relationship among language, literature, culture, and diaspora. I argue that immigrants to Canada try to retain their distinct culture, language, and identity while being part of Canadian society. In chapter two, I take a comparative look at the development of English language in the Indian subcontinent as well as in Canada, and reason that linguistic hybridity is a result of the coming together of various cultures. In chapter three, I introduce different ways by which writers have used heritage languages. Looking at diverse technical strategies in light of Bakhtin's theory, I determine that South Asian Canadian writers have created a language unique to themselves through various tactics. I contend that the use of neo-English is not an innocent act on the part of the writer; rather, linguistic hybridity is a political act which serves the purpose of resistance, cultural retention, and an expression of hybrid identity. In chapter four, I take a detailed look at the vernacular tradition in South Asian Canadian writing. Finally,

in chapter five I provide a detailed comparison of both the English and vernacular traditions of writing, and make a case for the redefinition of the canon of Canadian literature so as to make it more inclusive and diverse.

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INTRODUCTION

In a house I do not own
In a country of isolation
In a land that belongs to others
I sit on folded legs, bent by cultural impulse.
Haruko Okano, *Come Spring*

The phenomenon of diaspora is very old and can certainly be said to characterize the human. However, the scale of diaspora in the twentieth century is what makes it distinct from the ancient diasporas. Because of globalization and the vast reach of mass media and technology, current diasporic encounters are much more intricate than before.

The concept of diaspora brings forth many related issues pertaining to nationality, ethnicity, race, and now, transnationalism and most importantly, cultural hybridity. The flow or movement of humans or diasporic movements naturally impact the formation of culture. Changing patterns of migrations have cultural consequences. As Steven Vertovec puts it:

> Aesthetic styles, identification and affinities, dispositions and behaviors, musical genres, linguistic patterns, moralities, religious practices and other cultural phenomena are more globalized, cosmopolitan and creolized or "hybrid" than even before. (qtd. in Cohen 128)

As a result of diaspora, cultures have "lost their territorial moorings" and have become "traveling cultures" (Cohen 128). We now have to be conscious of the "multiple subject positions," including race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale and sexual orientation, which form the building blocks of identity in the postmodern world (Cohen 129). According to Salman Rushdie, the great possibility that mass migration gives to the world is the newness that enters the world because of "*mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that" (qtd. in Cohen 130). Rushdie, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha and many other authors use the term "hybridity" to indicate the evolution of new, dynamic, mixed cultures. When people from one country move into another, they not only bring in their 'home' culture to the 'host' country, but, with the passage of time, adopt the culture of the 'host' country. This results in two different aspects of cultural formation: on the one hand, there is the 'localization' of global culture, or what is referred to by globalization theorists as 'glocalization;' on the other hand, there is the globalization of local culture. Consequently, we see the formation of transnational cultures.

Among others, two aspects that are closely connected to culture are language and literature. Language possesses a distinctive position in human life. It "provides the dominant medium for social interaction helping to enable the distinctive forms of organization that we call cultures" (Lucy 1). Language carries identity and memory. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o argues, "language is a collective memory bank of people's experience in history", and culture is embodied through literature (289). When people move into diaspora, they lose the linguistic ties to their 'home' country, along with other ties; this has social, cultural, as well as emotional implications. In the literary world, writers have tried to express the gap that a diasporan feels through various forms of linguistic structures. Yet, there is a lack of scholarship in the area of the study of the interrelationship of language, literature, culture and diaspora, and this dissertation intends to fill this void in the context of South Asian Canadian literature.

Canada has a long tradition of ethnic minority writing. Writers have either written in their heritage languages[1] or have used these languages as a part of their English language writing. Thus, writers such as Joy Kogawa and Hiromi Goto use Japanese in their writing; Frank Paci and Nino Ricci employ Italian; while Rohinton Mistry and M. G. Vassanji utilize Gujarati in their works. On the other hand, writers such as Josef Škvorecký, Ikram Brelvi, or Jay Gajjar choose to write in their heritage languages. While there have been some scattered articles about the use of heritage languages by these ethnic minority writers, there has been no extensive study to demonstrate this.

In this dissertation, through the study of South Asian Canadian[2] writing, I discuss the relationship between heritage languages, diasporic writing and culture. First, I examine the writers writing in English and delve into different ways by which writers use heritage languages while writing in English; I also investigate various reasons as to why these writers do so. I focus mostly on the works of Rohinton Mistry, M. G. Vassanji, and Anita Rau Badami. However, I also draw on other South Asian Canadian writers such as Michael Ondaatje, Uma

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[1] Joan Swann et al. in A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics define heritage language as "The ancestral or background language(s) of groups, whose members have shifted or are in the process of shifting to the Majority Language. The term 'heritage language' thus includes indigenous languages, colonial languages, and migrant languages. Some heritage languages are no longer spoken within the speech community while others are still spoken, but no longer (or only partially) acquired by the younger generation" (133). I follow this definition.

[2] I use the term South Asian Canadian much the same as Diane McGifford who explains it thus in the introduction to The Geography of Voice: "The term 'South Asian Canadian literature' refers to the writings of Canadians who trace their origins from one of the countries of the Indian subcontinent: writers who have come directly to Canada from one of these countries or indirectly by way of Britain or a former British colony, usually East or South Africa, or the Caribbean or the Pacific Islands" (ix). As McGifford rightly notes, many of the South Asian Canadian writers have never seen the land of their ancestors. However, many have maintained linguistic ties at least on spoken levels if not written.

Parameswaran, and Shyam Selvadurai, among others. These writers, although belonging to different countries, share the same colonial past; they are also tied by their experience as being the first generation immigrants in Canada. While Mistry is the most prolific South Asian Canadian writer who uses heritage languages in his English writing, I choose Vassanji as a representative of a writer in what I call 'second diaspora'; he still retains the language of the ancestral land as well as the homeland left behind while writing in the official language of the adopted land.[3] Badami's choice helps in keeping a gender balance in the selection of these writers, as she too has earned herself a stable position in the South Asian Canadian literary scene.

My thesis is two-fold. Thus, I also look at the diaspora writing in heritage languages, especially the South Asian languages.[4] For the purpose of analyzing writings in heritage languages, I focus primarily on literature produced between 1960 and 2006.[5] My research centres specifically on writings in Gujarati, Hindi, and Urdu, not only because I know these languages but also since most of the literary activity exists in these languages only[6] (Sugunasiri 8). I deal with the works of writers such as Jay Gajjar, Prakash Mody, Smita Bhagwat and Nita Dave in Gujarati, Suresh Kumar Goyal and Dushyant Saraswat in Hindi, and Ashfaq Hussain, Ikram Brelvi, Shakeela Rafiq, Khalid Sohail and W. A. Shaheen in Urdu. These writers are important because some of them were established writers in their 'home' countries and continued to write in the 'host' country in their heritage languages; however, they have not received much attention in Canada. I have also selected these writers as representatives of different countries and languages. By writing in heritage languages, these authors restore an ethnic identity and refuse to submit to the political dominance of English, thus resisting the hegemony of English and linguistic imperialism.

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[3] Vassanji was born in East Africa, however, his ancestry is from Indian lineage; he uses Gujarati, Cutchi, Punjabi, and Hindi of the Indian subcontinent as well as Swahili in his writing.

[4] My interest in this area is backed by my thorough knowledge of Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu languages and Kachchi dialect, and partial knowledge of Sanskrit and Punjabi languages.

[5] There is some activity in Punjabi prior to the 1960s; writings in other South Asian languages started mostly in the 1960s with increased immigration from the Indian subcontinent.

[6] Much work has been done in Punjabi. Yet, while I will touch briefly on Punjabi writing in Canada, I will avoid any detailed analysis as it is beyond the scope of this project to cover the tremendous amount of work done in this language. Some of the earliest South Asian immigrants to Canada were from the province of Punjab, and thus Punjabi writing is the oldest among the South Asian Canadian writing. Moreover, substantial work has been done in the field of Punjabi literature; see Sugunasiri; Kalsey. There is some activity in Tamil; I do not read Tamil, but

What is the difference between diasporic writing in English and the writing in heritage languages? Do the writers writing in English and the ones writing in languages other than English address the same issues or are they different? Is there a variation in the way these writings are produced and consumed? Does the choice of language affect the way the text is received and read? And above all, is linguistic hybridity a common element or is it exclusive to the writers writing in English? These and other paradigmatic questions have received relatively little attention from scholars in the emerging field of diaspora studies, despite the exponential increase in scholarship and diasporic theory in recent years. The work of scholars such as Arjun Appadurai, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Rey Chow, and R. Radhakrishnan has been useful because it addresses significant issues for my

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Chelva Kanaganayakam has done some preliminary work on Tamil writing in Canada. See Kanaganayakam, History and Imagination.

thesis, but it does not address exactly what I propose because these scholars do not identify the issue of the role of heritage languages in diasporic literature. Use of heritage languages is a factor that is intrinsically part of the diasporization. In Canada, while diaspora scholarship has been rich in studies of identity politics, gender issues, migration, alienation, cultural retention and assimilation, no scholar, to the best of my knowledge, has yet focused on the role of heritage languages in the shaping of literatures written in diaspora. Also, while much attention has been paid to South Asian Canadian diasporic writing in English, those writing in languages other than English have been ignored by and large in spite of ample documentary evidence about their existence.[7]

Before I venture into this project, it is important to address the position of this research in the field of Comparative Literature so as to place the writing in focus.

The Comparative Literature Perspective

The term "littérature comparée" was originally used by French scholar Abel Françoise Villemain in 1827-28, which then was taken up by Sainte-Beuve. Mathew Arnold coined the English term "Comparative Literature," but, as Milan Dimić rightly puts it, "the discipline is defined less by comparisons (which occur in any inquiry in the humanities) than by studies based on the concept that literature, in addition to being the product of a nation and the expression of a language, is also – like music or painting – a universal human phenomenon" ("Comparative Literature"). Also, Goethe predicted that globalization (although the word was not that current in those days and not exactly used) would lead to the study of "world literature":

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[7] See Sugunasiri; Khan.

> If such a world literature will soon come into being, as is inevitable given the ever increasing rapidity of human interaction, then we may not expect anything more or different from [this literature] than what it can and does achieve [. . .], Whatever pleases the masses will expand without limit and, as we are already witnessing, find approval in all areas and regions. (qtd. in Saussy 6)

The field of Comparative Literature in Canada is very young, having gained some momentum only in the 1960s; also, the scope has been very limited. Given the unique linguistic structure of the country, and the colonial assumption that Canada is a nation founded on two cultures – French and English (which erases the existence of aboriginal communities and cultures altogether), the scope of Comparative Literature has mostly remained confined to comparison of French and English literature.[8] The Official Language Act of 1969 furthered this act of ghettoized comparison. While it has now become fashionable to reflect on ethnic minority writing and aboriginal writing, the focus has largely been on works produced in English. Little or no attention has been paid to the influence of world languages on Canadian literature or to those works produced in non-English or non-French languages. If Comparative Literature means the study of literature from an international, multilingual and multicultural viewpoint, not much has been achieved in Canada in this regard. My project relates to the multicultural and multilingual aspect of Canadian identity.

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[8] See Sutherland; Bumsted; Young.

It is the job of a comparatist to study literature in a wide international framework; while world literature is the broad base in which one needs to work, how can I ignore the 'world' within Canada? Canada is fortunate to have the world at its doorsteps; but unfortunately, this world has not been valued as much as it needs to be. While it is necessary to explore literatures outside of the nation, the exercise would be superficial if we do not first study 'our own'. Immigration has created new transnational patterns within Canada; and we ought to have an "openness to comparisons that involve literature of less diffusion, whether in eastern Europe, in the Americas, in Africa or wherever, to methodologies that have been ignored, underrated or untranslated" (Hart, "Ever-changing Configurations" 2). Thus, this project is based on the assumption that while Comparative Literature encourages the study of world literature, it also recognizes the value of exploring national literatures from a multicultural, multilingual angle. After all, "A multicultural engagement within countries like Brazil, Australia, Canada, and the United States (but more and more globally) represents another dimension" of comparison (Hart, "Ever-changing Configurations" 3). The writers that I focus on are clearly influenced by the culture, languages, and politics of the Indian subcontinent. Thus this study involves the discussion of Canadian literature from a non-national or rather a global perspective as well. As the Bernheimer Report states, "comparatists should be alert to the significant differences *within* any national culture, which provide a basis for comparison, research, and critical-theoretical inquiry. Among these are differences (and conflicts) according to region, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and colonial or postcolonial status" (43-44). This project places South Asian Canadian writing in English and South Asian Canadian writing in heritage languages in a comparative perspective while inducting it in the broader scenario of Canadian literature. This dissertation studies linguistic hybridity in South Asian Canadian writing in English as well as the contribution of writings in heritage languages, and expands on various ways in which writers have experimented with languages while making use of various dialects and local slang, and explains various reasons for this hybridization. Thus, the project is best in a comparative perspective as "Comparative literature is ideally suited to pursue ways in which [differences of region, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and colonial or post-colonial status] are conjoined with differences in language, dialect, and usage (including jargon and slang) as well as with problems of dual or multiple language-use and modes of hybridization" (Bernheimer 44).

Further, I analyze the literature in heritage languages in Canada and argue for the expansion of the canon of Canadian literature, which so far has limited itself to works in English and French. My argument also fits in well with the assertion of the Bernheimer Report:

> Comparative Literature should be actively engaged in the comparative study of the canon formation and in reconceiving the canon. Attention

> should also be paid to the role of non-canonical texts, readings from contestatory, marginal, or subaltern perspectives. The effort to produce such readings, given prominence recently in, for example, feminist and postcolonial theory, complements the critical investigation of the process of canon formation – how literary values are created and maintained in a particular culture – and vitalizes the attempt to expand canons. (44)

In Canada, historically, ethnic minority writers have been marginalized and very few have recently been canonized. Writers writing in heritage languages have yet to enter the canon; my project is thus also a plea for altering the canon of Canadian literature, and I argue that prominence be given to these writers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. While this research furthers the multilingual component of ethnic minority writing, it does not devalue the contribution of English or French traditions to the Canadian literary milieu. If anything, it stands by the writers writing in heritage languages and mixed languages, who I believe make the canon of Canadian literature richer. Convergence of different cultures is a given to the existence of these Canadian writers who take their inspiration from their homelands. This is in no way an attempt at promoting multiculturalism as a "politically correct way of acquiring more or less picturesque information about others whom we don't really want to know, but [is] a tool to promote significant reflection on cultural relations, translations, dialogue and debate" (Bernheimer 45). I believe that as a comparatist and a Canadianist, it is imperative for me to draw attention to the body of writing that has certainly been left behind due to various reasons discussed throughout this dissertation.

One argument that has always been forwarded for not reading or promoting the above mentioned works lies in questioning the aesthetic value of these works, but while aesthetics is to be looked for, there also has to be a recognition that the language in which literature is created is "something more than a delivery system for content, that it be understood as having a weight and resistance of its own" (Saussy 14). Hans Saussy argues that "without training in specific languages and canons, a comparatist will have nothing to work with" (11). Similarly, I believe a Canadianist will have a lot less to work with without the study of languages in a multilingual society. David Damrosch, in his analysis of "world literature," suggests that from the old divisions of "major authors" and "minor authors," world literature has now a new system of three levels: a *hypercanon*, a *countercanon*, and a *shadow canon* ("Hypercanonical Age" 45). I would like to extend this model to Canadian literature, but first let us take a look at Damrosch's explanation of these levels. He writes:

> The hypercanon is populated by the older "major" authors who have held their own or even gained ground over the past twenty years. The countercanon is composed of the subaltern and "contestatory" voices of writers in languages less commonly taught and in minor literatures within great-power languages. Many, even most, of the old major

> authors coexist quite comfortably with these new arrivals to the neighborhood, very few of whom have yet accumulated anything like their fund of cultural capital. Far from being threatened by these unfamiliar neighbors, the old major authors gain new vitality from association with them, and only rarely do they need to admit one of them directly into their club [. . .], As we sustain the system today, it is the old "minor" authors who fade increasingly into the backgrounds, becoming a sort of shadow canon that the older scholarly generation still knows, but whom the younger generations of students and scholars encounter less and less. This process can be seen even within the national literatures, where pressures of time and range are much less pronounced than in the larger scale of world literature. (45-46)

If we apply this model to Canadian literature, clearly the hypercanon is comprised of Margaret Atwood, Gabrielle Roy, Anne Hébert, Robertson Davies, Alice Munro, Frederick Philip Grove, Robert Kroetsch and the like, to name just a few. Michael Ondaatje, Tomson Highway, Lee Maracle, Rohinton Mistry, Joy Kogawa and other ethnic minority writers writing in English have also entered the hypercanon in the past twenty years or so. Given that Canadian literature is still very young, I believe we still do not have a shadow canon; we are nostalgic about everything that was created here. But what about the countercanon? Do we have one? If we classify the works of ethnic minority writers (writing in English) as minor literatures, then yes, but we certainly have not included what Damrosch calls "voices of writers in languages less commonly taught," and thus our countercanon is incomplete. A part of this project deals with heritage language writing and makes an argument to include these minority voices in the countercanon of Canadian literature. Including Josef Škvorecký, or Ikram Brelvi in the canon will enrich the hypercanon and will not in anyway displace or replace the major writers, be it Ondaatje, Atwood, or Richler. It is the job of the teachers, scholars, and translators to develop the countercanon. Damrosch laments that the focus of teachers of world literature is very limited and thus "far too often, a student will emerge from college having read *Things Fall Apart* three times, and *Beloved* four times, but never having read Mahfouz or Ghalib" ("Hypercanonical Age" 51). Likewise, students of Canadian literature come out reading Susanna Moodie and Joy Kogawa over and over, and do not know some of the latest works thanks to anthologies that are still very nostalgic in nature.

Consequently, this dissertation will help advance the field of Comparative Literature which "has been facing head-on the need to go beyond its roots and to broaden the linguistic and cultural scope of its work to include the rest of the world" (Hutcheon, "Comparative Literature" 225). Studying authors in their cultural and linguistic milieu is not only relevant but crucial to the question of Canadian literary and cultural identity. M. M. Bakhtin argues that:

> literature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be studied outside the total cultural context. It cannot be severed from the rest of culture and related directly to socio-economic or other factors.

> These factors influence culture as a whole and only through it and in conjunction with it do they affect literature. The literary process is a part of the cultural process and cannot be torn away from it. (qtd. in Skulj 209)

Nevertheless, very limited attempts have been made to study the cultural influences, especially linguistic influences, on ethnic minority writing in Canada. In fact, at times, the use of heritage languages in the English-Canadian texts has been received negatively. I think it is important to address this issue as I believe that these writers use this mixed language for a purpose. Language has been one of the primary means of struggle in the post-colonial literary world.[9] The majority of my writers have come from post-colonial nations; thus, they do carry the baggage of linguistic politics. Furthermore, Canada is also no stranger to language politics and its status as a post-colonial nation is also something that cannot be totally ruled out.[10] The unwanted criticism of the use of linguistic hybridity in ethnic minority writing in English and unwarranted ignorance of writing in heritage languages furthers the need for this research. For example, Mistry has been criticized for his linguistic hybridity; in fact, his English language skills have been questioned. Michael Darling, in his analysis of Mistry's short story collection Tales from Firozsha Baag, writes:

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[9] I use Ashcroft et al.'s definition wherein they define 'post-colonial' as covering "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" and post-colonial literatures as those that "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre" (Empire 2).

[10] See Moss.

> Mistry's weakness is his diction, which occasionally seems to evoke the legacy of the Raj: phrases like 'high dudgeon', 'unbeknownst to', and 'cherubic features' don't really fit the contexts into which they're placed. Also, the Indian words are often strung together in what seems like an unnecessary striving for 'local colour': '*Bawaji* got *pann pichkari* right on his white *dugli*…' (qtd. in Joseph 131).

Addressing this criticism, Clara Joseph rightly argues that the critics fail in understanding this text as they do not view it "in terms of discourse analysis" and that "their focus is the word, the sentence, and yet their conclusions relate the text to broader systems of society and language at the level of discourse and context" (Joseph 132). In chapter three, as I view linguistic hybridity from a discourse analysis concept, I will be leveling some of the criticism raised against these writers.

Two decades ago, Ronald Sutherland suggested that comparatists pay attention to the growing body of South Asian Canadian literature; he wrote:

> perhaps the richest and most rapidly growing new component of Canadian literature is the work being produced by the writers of South Asian affiliations. Whether they write in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, other languages, or English, they constitute an intriguing dimension. I can already see certain thematic parallels with other Canadian works – a duality of attitude toward nature, a special sense of exile. But there are also fascinating contrasts, the expected

> result of a cultural conditioning so vastly different from that of most native Canadians. And, of course, the great variety among South Asians themselves concords with the existing diversity of Canadians and Canadian literature. It is inevitable, then, indeed necessary, that the discipline of Comparative Canadian Literature should incorporate the contributions of both South Asian Canadian creative writers and literary scholars. (73-74)

Unfortunately, this call has not been answered except for a few articles here and there. This project serves well to answer this call and thus furthers the discipline of Comparative Canadian Literature.

Justification of the problem's pursuit

South Asian Canadian writers have varied experiences but share a number of links – the ancestral, cultural, and the colonial. These writers have been contributing since the 1960s to the richness of Canadian literature. Even as the immigrant writers who arrived in the Sixties were writing in Punjabi, Urdu, and Gujarati, the later immigrants started writing in English. In the last two decades, literature by South Asian Canadians in English as well as in heritage languages has reached new heights. While South Asian Canadian literature has already been approached from ethnographic, sociological, and historical perspectives by scholars such as M. G. Vassanji, Milton Israel, and Uma Parameswaran, I deal with it from a linguistic angle. I demonstrate how authors employing heritage languages in English writing, or those writing solely in heritage languages, deal with the issues related to diaspora, and how, by returning to indigenous languages, they restructure attitudes toward the local and indigenous cultures. While the current debates in diaspora and postcolonial theory generally focus on dislocation, assimilation, linguistic erasures, and hybrid identities, no scholar to the best of my knowledge has yet analyzed the works of the diaspora writers from the linguistic angle. Language, literature, and culture do not exist in isolation. Roger Fowler comments on this interaction: "To treat literature as discourse is to see the text as mediating relationships between language-users: not only relationships of speech, but also of consciousness, ideology, role and class. The text ceases to be an object and becomes an action or process" (90). And thus we see the need and urgency to address the issue.

The South Asian Canadian writers writing in English have created a hybrid language to ease their passage into the New World; their hybrid characters or the identities of these characters are woven around these hybrid/ neo-languages that are a mix of Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, or others with English. These neo-languages speak volumes about resistance and culture-retention; however, to date, no scholar has taken an in-depth look at this phenomenon, at least not in the context of South Asian Canadian writing.[11] The scope of academic work which currently exists on this issue is very limited. Though there are some stray articles on the subject, academically it is a concern that has been overlooked so far. While knowing different languages for analyzing this topic may be an obvious hindrance, the fact that linguistically hybrid writing has by far been received as 'impure' writing may also have contributed to the lack of interest in the subject, along with an 'enthusiasm' to 'protect' the canon. Nevertheless, I believe that in a multicultural nation such as Canada, these writings are not only reflective of multiculturalism, but they also provide or, in fact, challenge the readers to go out and seek the meaning of the non-English words or passages in the text.

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[11] It must be noted that there are similar works in the field of Native-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, Japanese-Canadian and other ethnic groups; any such work in context of South Asian Canadian writing is seriously lacking.

My work is significant because of the new interest and awareness about the linguistic hybridity in literature; the influx of new books on the subject is a proof of this interest.[12] Nevertheless, while these books deal with concepts such as Asian English, Indian English, and Jewish English, there are no such works when it comes to Canadian writing. Writers indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, such as Raja Rao, have received attention for their experimentation with language; mostly this has been so because their writing has been considered a post-colonial phenomenon – a way to write back to the empire. Not much attention has been paid to the same phenomenon in Canadian writing because there is no empire to resist, although Canada recognizes the Queen as the head of the state. While I believe that, although the Canadian writers of the Indian subcontinent may be using hybrid-English in continuation of the post-colonial tradition of the 'back-home,' not all ethnicities in Canada do so as a result of post-colonial outcry. Conversely, the fact remains that whether it be Indo-Canadian, Japanese-

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[12] For more information on this, see Srinivas Aravamudan; Braj K. Kachru,. Asian Englishes; Hana Wirth-Nesher.

Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, or Italian-Canadian, most of them are united by the factor of linguistic hybridity. I argue that this commonality is a result of every ethnic community's need to retain its language, identify with its language and culture and to assert resistance to language, as language after all has colonizing power, whether the colonization is in politics, culture, economics, or literature.

Even as those writing in English such as Rohinton Mistry, Michael Ondaatje, M. G. Vassanji, Anita Rau Badami, and Uma Parameswaran, have been published widely and are recognized with the mainstream writing, writers in heritage languages have been confined to writing in local community newspapers or getting their works published outside of Canada. Also, although the writing in English has been reaching new heights with writers receiving Governor General's Awards and Giller Prizes, the writers in South Asian heritage languages have been creating in a silent corner. Heritage language writers have been writing since the 1960s, but, the quantity of work has now attained new heights with the increase in immigration. But hardly any of these writers are known, even to the people with knowledge of these languages. While the reasons for this are many, I think it is very necessary to draw the attention of the literary world to these writers who do not get attention because of their choice of language. I believe that my dissertation will bring these writers to the forefront, which may lead to the translations of their works. The mainstream English-reading audience will certainly benefit from these translations. In addition to relating the work in English and South Asian Native tongues, I explore the reasons for the lack of enthusiastic reception of these writers, despite its production in the multicultural society in which they live. Furthermore, I discuss how their writing represents and creates a bridge for the greater part of the population whose lives are still governed by their mother tongues.

I problematize diasporic writing as something that is not just transforming English and English speaking cultures globally, but bringing to bear origins as well as parallels and contrasts in materials in these cultures not written in English. As much as the second half of this project focuses on writers writing in heritage languages, I am convinced that placing them in the more intricate context that lies alongside South-Asian writing in English will make a more original contribution to the specific debate on diaspora writing in particular and ethnic Canadian writing in general. I believe it is necessary to revalue the role of heritage languages, and since, to the best of my knowledge, such a project has not yet been undertaken, my research will be a unique and original contribution to the Canadian literary scene.

Although my thesis focuses on South Asian Canadian writing in particular, it will have implications for ethnic Canadian writing in general. Writers such as Joy Kogawa and Hiromi Goto have used Japanese extensively in their writing, just as Italian-Canadian writers and Chinese Canadian writers make use of their heritage languages in their writing. Also, there are writers from these cultures who write exclusively in languages of their cultures; my thesis will open a debate towards recognition of these writers too.

Corpus and methodology

The methodology of my thesis is in dialogue with post-colonial critics such as Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, and Braj Kachru. Language is a medium of power in the post-colonial debate. It is an ethnographic tool by which different cultural experiences are portrayed, thus creating 'transcultural dialogues.' In The Empire Writes Back, Ashcroft and others distinguish between the 'standard' British English, the language of the colonizer and the linguistic code 'english' which the language has become in the post-colonial discourse. The use of English and english distinguishes between 'centre' and 'periphery.' As Ashcroft and others assert, "the language of the(se) 'peripheries' was shaped by an oppressive discourse of power" (Empire 8). The emergence of neo-English or english rejects the power of empire. Post-colonial writers turn around the dominant language, in this case English, and use it for their cultural representation. There are two clear approaches: rejection or subversion. Chinua Achebe with reference to African writers who used English, writes:

> for me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it [. . .] I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings. (62)

On the other hand, Ngugi wa Thiong'o felt that language and culture are interconnected and that colonialism controlled culture through language, and thus he chose to write in his native tongue, Gikuyu. Both Achebe's and Thiong'o's approaches are helpful. While South Asian writers writing in English follow Achebe's method of employing 'new English,' writers writing in heritage languages have obviously followed Thiong'o's footsteps. Yet, the discourse of both groups is defined by the post-colonial politics of language. I take post-colonial theory to apply to the Canadian literary situation as Canadian literature is clearly marked by the politics of 'core' and 'periphery.' While South Asian Canadian writers continue the post-colonial tradition of their home countries, this certainly has its own relevance in Canada; Canada, due to its policy of bilingualism, has clearly created an environment of linguistic hegemony as English and French enjoy official status while other languages are shifted to the margins.

For the theoretical production of my thesis, discourse analysis and diaspora theory will form the methodological approach along with post-colonialism. For discourse analysis I mainly rely on Bakhtin while drawing from other linguists. Bakhtin's original philosophy of language will provide me with a valuable set of analytical tools for my thesis. According to Bakhtin, a novel is an active and interactive system of discourse. Bakhtin introduces the concepts of heteroglossia and polyglossia. The novel consists of a multitude of discourses and rests on a diversity of languages, and thus is the most appropriate form for denoting heteroglossia. Bakhtin, in The Dialogic Imagination, writes: "Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel" (263). Another issue that Bakhtin examines is polyglossia, or the plurality of languages, discourses, and voices interacting within the framework of the text. Bakhtin argues that without intercultural and interlinguistic exchange, a given language cannot free itself from the monological, hierarchical language of myth and epic. For him, "the dialogic discourse that goes into the making of the novel comes to life only when the language of the familiar encounters the language of the alien" (299). Bakhtin's theory will help me analyze the intercultural and interlinguistic structures which seem to be at work in most of the South Asian Canadian works.

I also draw from the works of other ethnic minority Canadian writers. For example, Japanese Canadian writers have also experimented with language while writing in English. Hiromi Goto, in her Chorus of Mushrooms, writes passages in Japanese throughout the text. Authors such as Goto refuse to translate non-English words used in their texts either in the body of the text or as a glossary. As Arun Mukherjee asserts, this refusal to translate is "the author's way of alerting us to the mysteries and depths of cultures and human beings, an artistic decision and a triumph that literary criticism, developed on monolingual and monocultural principles, has yet to recognize" (42). What Mukherjee says with reference to Sky Lee is true of many ethnic minority Canadian writers – that each of these writers "concretize for us the pluri-cultural nature of humanity on the one hand and the loss and deprivation felt by those transplanted to an alien cultural universe on the other hand" (42). My research suggests that the use of hybrid English is a common phenomenon in ethnic Canadian writing. The ethnic Canadian writers define their presence through language. For them, language is not only an instrument of communication, it is a means to construct identity and to preserve and promote culture; it is a way of representation. For the theorization of ethnic minority writing in Canada, I will draw on the writings of Arun Mukherjee, E. D. Blodgett and Linda Hutcheon among others.

The first chapter of my thesis tackles the relationship among culture, language, literature and diaspora. After drawing from various diaspora theories I propose a new theory for linguistic analysis of diaspora literature while arguing that the diaspora writer's choice of hybrid language is a result of being a part of hybrid cultures. I will establish the Canadian context of the same, applying the analysis to South Asian Canadian writing.

As E. D. Blodgett argues in his book Five-Part Invention, Canadian culture "is not two, but many, cultures" (207). Immigrants in Canada struggle to assimilate while at the same time wanting to retain their distinct culture. As a part of this crisis, they try to cling to their language, because the death of a language would pronounce the death of a culture. As a part of their diasporization, migrants see the need to be close to their language and cultures while adapting to the mainstream social and cultural values. This need is also reflected in literature.

I will also trace the history of South Asians in Canada and establish that their diasporic history is clearly tied to the literary one.

In the second chapter, I will provide an overview of the position of the English language in the Indian subcontinent[13] as well as in Canada. In order to understand how my writers use the English language, it is necessary to decipher the development of language in both their 'home' country as well as the 'host' country. While the language that they have brought with them affects their writing, the languages and language politics of their adopted land also have influence on the language they choose. Before venturing into the writers' use of linguistic hybridity in the next chapter, here I will also establish how the debate between English and heritage languages is not new, and how the issue of language has in fact been on Canadian ethnic minority writers' agenda for a long time.

In my third chapter I focus on the different ways by which South Asian Canadian writers have used heritage languages in the English writing. Post-colonial texts signify difference in many ways – through thematic variance, in nomenclature, or through their depiction of places. However, language is their primary site of difference and "it is in language that the curious tension of cultural 'revelation' and cultural 'silence' is most evident" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 58). Some of the techniques that the post-colonial writers use in their writing are allusion, glossing, use of untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion, code-switching, and vernacular transcription.[14] At times a glossary with explicated vernacular words follows the text; but at times there is no glossary, but instead the author explains the word or phrase within the context. Sometimes there is neither glossary nor explication; the writer may italicize the vernacular words. Another way of incorporating vernacular words is neutralization through code-mixing (Kachru 292).[15] South Asian Canadian writers extend these post-colonial techniques to their writing. I will argue that, by using these different strategies, what these writers have created is different varieties of English which are unique in themselves. Thus while Vassanji and Mistry use Gujarati in their works, Selvadurai uses Tamil. What this leads to is a mix of languages that may be termed as Hinglish (Hindi mixed with English), Gujalish (Gujarati mixed with English), Tamilish (Tamil mixed with English), so on and so forth. As Braj B. Kachru argues, "the process of the Indianization of English has acquired an institutionalized status" (293). I will analyze how the South Asian Canadian writers make use of this Indianized English in their works.

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[13] I use the terms 'South Asia' and the 'Indian subcontinent' interchangeably.

In this chapter I will also look at reasons for this 'chutnification' of English. As much as the diasporic writers use English as a medium of communication, their language is a neo-language which is mixed with words from other languages. While this is a result of cultural hybridization which is apparent in diaspora, these writers are also following in the footsteps of the post-colonial Indian writing in English. Canada is a nation made of various cultures, and although there are many who would like to claim "two solitudes," the fact remains that there are "other solitudes," making Canada a nation of "multiple solitudes." Although Canada has not been a colony in the way that other countries such as India have been, the culture here has been quite centralized. The ethnic writers have mostly been at the margins and they question the centre through their use of mixed language. While linguistic hybridity is relevant in post-colonial cultures, it is equally relevant in nations with cultural plurality. Language is also a medium of resistance while being a mode of culture retention. Language is a tool by which the writer fights for the preservation of culture, and reflects upon the cultural identity of a diasporic person. Language is used to voice the disappointments against racism, discrimination, and to resist. As Joe Pivato argues convincingly, these writers, "by appropriating the majority language are attempting to exercise control over that language and over the act of interpretation. They are taking back their own voice by using the language of the majority culture. Their voice was lost with immigration and with the deterritorialization of their languages" (Echo 53-54). Language is also about memory; it connects the writer and his characters to what has been left behind. The characters that speak a mix of English with other languages define their cultural and national identity through this fusion. This hybrid language not only serves as an artistic expression of hybrid or diasporic identities, but also as a reminder of the fact that language is an integral part of one's identity; changing space does not necessarily mean changing linguistic loyalties. The hybrid language that these writers and their characters use provides them with a link to their past, their memories and their nostalgia for their culture. I will thus explain how, through the use of heritage languages in South Asian writing in general and diaspora writing in particular, writers are not only following the post-colonial tradition of writing but also appealing to the representation of hyphenated identities. The use of heritage languages within English writing defines the cultural identity of the writer on the one hand, while pronouncing the relationship of language with culture, on the other. Although the use of heritage language in the English texts serves as what Francesco Loriggio calls "the device of the stone," it also illustrates the tensions associated with bicultural identity (39). By using heritage languages "for signifying heightened emotions, for expressing familial relationships for which English has no words, and for conveying culturally shared memories and meanings that once again have no English equivalents" these texts, as Arun Mukherjee puts it, "help us see how ethnicity, language, and culture are intertwined" (46). My goal in this chapter is to examine how language shapes South Asian writing in particular and ethnic minority writing in general. Ethnic minority texts through the presence of heritage languages enlighten their audience about the multicultural and multilingual disposition of Canadian society.

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[14] For detailed explanation of these techniques see Ashcroft et al. Empire pp. 37-76.

[15] 'Code mixing' refers to the use of lexical items or phrases from one code in the stream of discourse of another. Neutralization thus is a linguistic strategy used to 'unload' a linguistic item from its traditional, cultural and emotional connotations by avoiding its use and choosing an item from another code. The borrowed item has referential meaning, but no cultural connotations in the context of the specific culture (Kachru, Alchemy 292).

In the fourth chapter I look at the vernacular tradition in diasporic literature, that is, the writers writing in Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, and Punjabi, among other languages. Surprisingly enough, in a multicultural nation such as Canada, writers' choice of language has been a debated issue for far too long. While Watson Kirkconnell, in 1935, introduced the idea of a "national literature" which would include writers writing in "other languages," the reception of writers writing in languages other than English and French is far from encouraging (Aponiuk 1). In the years that have passed since 1935, Canada has received many immigrant writers writing in many different languages. Although critics have argued that the writers writing in languages other than English and French be included in the definition of "Canadian Literature," there is no consensus on the position of these writers. J. M. Bumsted argues that "Anyone who lives and/or writes and/or publishes in Canada must be accepted as a Canadian" (18). As such, I will first discuss the tradition of writing in non-official languages in Canada before moving to the specifics of the same convention in South Asian languages.

Further, I take a detailed look at works in Urdu, Gujarati, and Hindi. I question the writers' choice of language and the emotional and political aspects that go along with it, and analyze their works against the works in English to see how the issues that they present are similar or dissimilar as the case may be. While some of the writers share the same concerns as the diasporic writers writing in English, many have a distinctly different style and content. Authors such as Suresh Kumar Goyal write in Hindi, while keeping in mind their Indian audience. So as the stories are set in Canada, there is clearly an attempt to 'educate' Indian readers about the Canadian life. Just as writers in English are trying to bring their 'home' culture to a global scale, writers in heritage languages are much more concerned about taking the global, in this case Canadian, culture back 'home.' Conversely, the concerns become similar when the audience is 'Canadian.' Thus, the Urdu poets who recite their poems at *mushairas*[16] in Canada do tend to reflect the issues of identity crisis, rootlessness and a general sense of nostalgia. It is interesting to note that with the passage of time, the thematics of Urdu literature in Canada has changed from a general outcry against the hostility of Canadian society towards more somber cries of assimilation and integration. The examination of literature in heritage languages will make the context of South Asian writing in English more complex.

The writers in Canada writing in languages other than English are trying to restore their cultural identity in the diasporic condition through the rejection of English. They refuse to submit to the political dominance of mainstream culture and that of official bilingualism. As much as the policy of bilingualism was not meant to sanction biculturalism, and an official multiculturalism policy was adopted soon after, ethnic minorities have always looked at the bilingualism policy as a blow to their culture, since language defines culture. Blodgett argues that "Despite the subsequent passage of the Multiculturalism Act (1987), provisions are not made for preservation of language other than that of the two charter languages; they are made only for the preservation of other cultures.

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[16] Gathering of poets

Taken together, both policies, flawed as they may be, strive to decentre a sense of Canada as embodying a single culture" (Five 207).

The discussions around South Asian Canadian writing, be they about the novel, the short story, poetry, or drama, have been based on works in English and have excluded a whole body of works in Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil and other South Asian languages. Given that these works are produced in Canada and that there are a considerable number[17] of Canadians who can read these languages, and do care about this literature, should these literatures be considered 'Canadian literature?' I will try to answer this question in this chapter while analyzing the writers' attempts to freeze their culture and create idealized cultural identities in their works. I will do this through a survey approach, as well as a brief thematic study of some of the works. Though I understand that a detailed literary analysis of the works can be helpful, it is beyond the scope of this project to examine these works in depth. The mandate of this dissertation is to put vernacular writing in a framework with writing in English; nonetheless, I recognize that a separate study of vernacular tradition in South Asian Canadian writing would be valuable.[18]

In Chapter Five, I give a detailed comparative analysis of both these groups of writers – those writing in English and those writing in heritage languages. I look at what motivates these writers' choice of language and how this choice affects the production and reception of their writing in Canada and elsewhere. I reason that the South Asian Canadian writers writing in English and those writing in languages other than English, on the one hand, come together through their cultural background and their portrayal of the same themes, but they also differ on many fronts. In fact, those writing in heritage languages are more 'Canadianized' in their content than their counterparts in English, and their choice of language is less political than those using hybridized English. Finally, considering both South Asian Canadian traditions, one in English and the other in heritage languages, and extending these traditions to ethnic minority writing in Canada in general, I make a case for a redefinition of Canadian literature so as to broaden it and welcome writers from various ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds within its perimeters.

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[17] According to the 2001 Census 18% of Canadians declared a non-official language as their mother tongue. Approximately 7,32,405 people stated one of the South Asian languages as their mother tongue.

[18] I intend to write a detailed history of vernacular tradition in South Asian Canadian writing in the near future; the project will give me an opportunity to elaborate on those aspects which have not been possible here.

CHAPTER I

Land, the ocean of Love;
Life inherent in its waves
One's kinship to the land
is the most sacred
Of all the world's relationships,
From the womb of the earth
Spring thousands of new seasons,
Land is the ultimate reality
In quest of this reality
I wander
endlessly
for my kinship
with my land
is severed.
My being is divided
into a thousand fragments
As a penance
I still bear
the curse of generations
God, I am tired
Join me to my land again
make me live for ever.

Ashfaq Hussain, *The Curse of Generations*
Trans from Urdu by Shehla Burney

The Canadian writer's choice of language is certainly affected by his/her background. As Alan Lawson writes, "When the cultural identity in question is that of a people transported to a new and strange place, the physical environment assumes unexpected importance and the language undergoes great strain" (169). For a writer in diaspora who faces multiple marginalizations, identity is constructed through language, and resistance through language becomes a means of cultural retention; it thus becomes inevitable to approach a writer's choice of language in light of his past and present. To this end, my objective in this chapter is to examine how diaspora is connected to culture and language and how in the Canadian context, especially in the literary context, language is connected to a diasporan's sense of identity and how a Canadian writer negotiates his/her Canadianness in relation to language, culture, and ethnicity[19].

Diaspora and Culture

I will begin here with the history of the term "diaspora." The term "diaspora" is derived from the Greek term *diasperien*, from *dia* – "across" and *–sperien*, "to sow or scatter seeds" (Mannur 1). It has historically referred to "displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movement of migration, immigration, or exile" (Mannur 1). It was first used to refer to the Jews living in exile from their Palestinian homeland, and

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[19] As I move to defining diaspora and relevant issues, I would like to mention here that my understanding of diaspora is defined not by ghettoized communities living together but by the diversity and resultant hybridity; as Stuart Hall affirms, "The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*" (244).

"suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries" (Mannur 1). Thus, the term "diaspora," historically speaking, has religious significance. The Black African diaspora which began in the sixteenth century is another example. Black Africans were dispersed across North America, South America and the Caribbean as a result of the slave trade. Consequently, diasporas can be voluntary or involuntary, and may be a result of trade, search for security, employment, or colonization.

Although the term "diaspora" has been used to represent a social condition and a societal process, according to Floya Anthias, in the modern age, it refers "to a population category or a social condition entailing a particular form of 'consciousness' which is particularly compatible with postmodernity and globalization, and like hybridity, embodies the globalizing principle of transnationalism" (631). The idiom is also often used very loosely to refer to all kinds of movements, actual or symbolic. William Safran writes in his groundbreaking essay, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," that today the term is used "as metaphoric designation(s) for several categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refuges, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*" (83). Safran has proposed that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the six characteristics that he mentions; these are:

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign regions;
> 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;
> 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
> 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
> 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
> 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (84)

For Safran, the Jewish diaspora is the "ideal diaspora" and that other groups, in order to qualify as a diaspora, should fall into the characteristics that he proposes. Safran's model is of course, not perfect, and recently, during a conference, I had a chance to chat with him about this model. He agreed that this model fails to include the second generation diasporans and also that not all diasporans in the current global world may harbor a 'desire to return.' Nonetheless, this model still remains the base for any diaspora studies.

On the other hand, culture is a social process which is closely related to different ways of life. According to The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics:

> In ordinary usage the word 'culture' displays a wide range of designations: it names intellectual and artistic practices, especially literature, music, painting, sculpture, theater, philosophy, and criticism; it describes processes of intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic, and moral development; it indicates the distinctive way of love of a people or period or of humanity as a whole; it signals refinement of taste, judgment, and intellect; and it includes manners, conventions, myths, institutions, and patterns of thought. Thus 'culture' refers simultaneously to products and processes, to material and symbolic production, to specific and general human development, to quotidian social practices and high arts, to ethics and aesthetics, to subcultures and civilization. (262)

As Raymond Williams puts it, culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (47).[20] According to E. B. Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Jonathan Hart defines culture as "the material, spiritual, and artistic expression of a group that defines itself or that others define as culture, both according to daily lived experience and according to practice and theory" ("Translating and Resisting Empire" 138). Thus, "to interpret culture is to understand the fruits of labor or of communities, it is to explicate sacred and secular texts" (Hart, Interpreting Cultures 3). It is but natural, then, that the flow or movement of humans would have impact on the formation of culture. As people move, they carry a large baggage of belief systems, customs, and traditions. According to Avtar Brah, "Cultures are never static: they evolve through history" (18). Thus, cultures are always in process of transformation. Different cultural transformations are aided by diasporas, thus leading to cultural hybridization. When people from one culture move into the other culture, they not only bring in their 'home' culture to the 'host' country but, with the passage of time, adopt the culture of the 'host' country. This results in two different aspects of cultural formation: on the one hand, there is the 'localization' of global culture, or what is referred by globalization theorists as 'glocalization;' on the other, there

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[20] J. M. Bumsted makes an interesting observation on "culture" in his "Introduction" to the Canadian Literature, Supplement No. 1, May 1987: "In simplest terms, we can see three major constellations of meaning for the word *culture*. One emphasizes a universal and idealistic striving for a state of cultivation, which tends to be absolute and fixed in nature. Another sees culture as the expression of the ways in which humans behave and find meaning in their lives, a relativistic and comparative operation which is prevalent in the social sciences and has been fundamental to anthropology and sociology. According to this approach, culture and society are linked, and each society has its own culture. Leaving aside for the moment the obvious question of what constitutes a society, a subject about which not all experts would agree, culture in its social science sense incorporates all the manifold behavioural patters of mankind, conscious and unconscious. While

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most people have no trouble in accepting that aboriginal people living on remote islands may be quite "uncivilized" yet still have a complex culture, many have considerable difficulty in appreciating that patterns of consumption of fast food in modern North American society are a part of Canadian culture. To eat at McDonald's is to make a cultural statement. As if matters were not already sufficiently complicated, there is another usage of culture which is the most commonly employed and accepted of all: the tendency to label as culture the material artifacts of creative and intellectual activity. Thus works of literature, music, painting, and the theatre are popularly regarded as "culture"" (11-12).

is the globalization of local culture. Consequently, we see the formation of transnational cultures.

The issue of cultural hybridization in turn gives rise to the question of cultural construction of identity or creation of hyphenated identities. According to Stuart Hall, cultural identities are emerging and "in transition," drawing on different traditions and harmonizing old and new without assimilation or total loss of the past. He describes this process as the evolution of "cultures of hybridity" and closely associates the growth of these cultures with the "new diasporas" created by the colonial experience and ensuing postcolonial migrations (Cohen 131). Moreover, identity "is simultaneously subjective and social, and is constituted in and through culture," and "culture and identity are inextricably linked concepts" (Brah 21). According to R. Radhakrishnan, the diasporic location "is the space of the hyphen that tries to coordinate, within an evolving relationship, the identity politics of one's place of origin with that of one's present home" (xiii). However, the hyphenated space furthers the sense of displacement. According to Ian Chambers, "The migrant's sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present, is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post) modern condition. This underlies the theme of diasporas, not only black, also Jewish, Indian, Islamic, Palestinian, and draws us into the processes whereby the previous margins now fold in on the centre" (qtd. in Cohen 133). Moving from one geopolitical space to another also involves moving from a certain emotional, psychological, and mental state to the other. As Benzi Zhang observes, diaspora "involves not only the crossing of geopolitical borders, but also the traversing of multiple boundaries and barriers in space, time, race, culture, language, and history" (126). This boundary crossing further affects identity-formation. In fact, diasporans have to relentlessly position themselves between the feeling of home-ness and homeless-ness; they feel a sense of loss, "some urge to reclaim, to look back" (Rushdie 10). But, it is difficult to reclaim the thing that was lost; what diasporic people are left with is "not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imagined homelands" (Rushdie 10). Thus, diaspora refers "not only to a process of migration, but also to a double relationship between two different cultural homes/origins" (Zhang 126). As Zhang notes, for diasporans to be 'legal citizens' is not difficult, but neither to be 'cultural citizens' (127). Conversely, many diasporans, in attempts to keep their 'home' cultures intact, build up walls around their communities and live with a "decentralized sense of belonging"(Zhang 127).

Diaspora has also been the predominant characteristic of the formation of a nation. The earlier conceptions of identity based on singular culture are no longer adequate to describe the transnational dimensions of national identity. James Clifford insists that the cultural formation of diasporas can never be exclusively nationalist (cited in Cohen 135). Moreover, Cohen argues that "nation-states are about welding the locals to a single place, gathering peoples and integrating ethnic minorities. Diasporas, by contrast, imply multiple attachments. They accommodate to, but also resist, the norms and claims of nationalists" (135). Basch and others elaborate this aspect in their book Nations Unbound:

> In contrast to the past, when nation-states were defined in terms of a people sharing a common culture within a bounded territory, this new conception of nation-state includes as citizens those who live physically dispersed within the boundaries of many other states, but who remain socially, politically, culturally, and often economically part of the nation-state of their ancestors. (qtd. in Cohen 136)

Consequently, diasporans, "in the process of crossing and re-crossing borders of space, time, race, culture, language, history and politics, translate and transform a static historical nation into a dynamic multinational and transnational society" (Zhang 140). With the redefining of nation-states comes the redefining of the position of marginalized groups within the nation-state. As Cohen asserts, new patterns of migration have helped "move the margins to the centre," thus making the marginal groups "suddenly nearby, present, attendant, co-existent" (134). At the same time, as multiple cultures become hybridized, one sees the creation of cosmopolitan and local cultures, resulting in deterritorialization of social identity. Arjun Appadurai rightly dissects the models of cultural shape and says that we have to think of "the configuration of cultural forms in today's world as fundamentally fractal; that is as possessing no Euclidean boundaries, structures, or regularities" (44).

At the other end of the diaspora spectrum are the experiences of discrimination and marginalization for the racially marginalized individual. Clifford claims that diaspora consciousness is

> constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion. The barriers facing racialized sojourners are often reinforced by socioeconomic constraints, particularly – in North America – the development of a post-Fordist, nonunion, low-wage sector offering very limited opportunities for advancement. Experience of loss, marginality, and exile are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement. This constitutive suffering coexists with the skills of survival: strength in adaptive distinction, discrepant cosmopolitanism, and stubborn visions of renewal. Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension (312).

Vijay Mishra, while proposing a theory for the Indian diaspora, argues that, while a diasporan feels a constant sense of loss, he tries to preserve that sense and thus creates "racist factions of purity as a kind of jouissance, a joy, a pleasure around which anti-miscegenation narratives of homelands are constructed against the reality of the homelands themselves. Racist narratives of homelands are therefore part of the dynamics of diasporas, as imaginary homelands are constructed from the space of distance to compensate for a loss occasioned by an unspeakable trauma" (423-24). Nonetheless, "diasporic subjects are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity – cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national – and these subjects are defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora" (Mannur 5). In all, diasporas lead to cultural hybridization, hyphenated identities, a sense of homelessness and non-belonging, fear of assimilation, an enrichment of literature and pop culture, and deterritorialized cultures, thus leading to formation of 'synthetic cultures' or 'transnational cultures' and hybridized languages. Of these issues, my interest lies in linguistic hybridity.

The Canadian Context

In the Canadian context, different diasporas have led to a rethinking of nationalism; given the colonial history of the nation, the early immigrants to Canada have generally not been identified as diaspora subjects. Then again, if we were to take the earlier immigrants/settlers as diasporans, Canada is a nation created by the diasporic subject. In fact, it can be argued that even the Aboriginal community which is indigenous to the land is in diaspora; I argue this on the basis of the classic definition of diaspora which means that people in diaspora long to go back to their land but generally are not able to do so. Aboriginal people have lost their land, though not in a literal sense[21] but a metaphorical way, and will never be able to go back to the nation that they knew as their own. Under these circumstances, Canada is identified by the hybridity which is a direct result of different diasporas coming together, namely English, French, Aboriginal, and other ethnicities. Canadian identity is thus marked by heterogeneity. After all,

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[21] I understand that this too can be argued.

"the shaping of national identities occurs within many discursive frames – juridical, political, civic, economic, and literary" (Mannur 7).

As mentioned earlier, identities are fluid, and not fixed. Stuart Hall's explication of cultural identity is very interesting; the same can be applied to national identities in Canadian context. Identity, he writes:

> …is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded in mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (236)

In Canada, while our national and cultural identities are shaped by past settlement, we have to be aware of our changing identity, which is a result of increasing immigration.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is one of the most important documents for attempting to understand Canadian culture and language. It identified culture as

> a way of being, thinking and feeling. It is a driving force animating a significant group of individuals united by a common tongue, and sharing the same customs, habits, and experiences. Clearly the two cultures designated in our terms of reference are those associated with the English and French languages in Canada. But as there are the two dominant languages, there are two principal cultures, and their influence extends, in greatly varying degrees, to the whole country. (Innis 4)

The Report added that language was "an essential expression of culture," and indeed, "it is at the core of the intellectual and emotional life of every personality" (Innis 3-4). While this report was later amended to include cultures other than English and French, thus reflecting the multicultural component of Canada, other languages never got official recognition. This exclusion intensified the politics of language. Ironically, although the new act was meant to recognize the ethnic minorities in Canada, multiculturalism has not always been embraced by ethnic minorities. Neil Bissoondath, in his book Selling Illusions, argues that the policy of multiculturalism, with its emphasis on the former or ancestral homeland and its insistence that *there* is more important than *here*, discourages the full loyalty of Canada's citizens. Opponents of multiculturalism believe in the global phenomenon of cultural hybridization, which seeks to take the good out of all the cultures that come together and create a new Culture. Thus one of Rohinton Mistry's characters in the short story titled "Squatter" in his collection Tales from Firozsha Baag puts it thus:

> The Multicultural Department is a Canadian invention. It is supposed to ensure that ethnic cultures are able to flourish, so that Canadian society will consist of a mosaic of cultures – that's their favourite word, mosaic – instead of one uniform mix, like the American melting pot. If you ask me, mosaic and melting pot are both nonsense, and ethnic is a polite way of saying bloody foreigner. But anyway, you understand Multicultural Department? Good. (168)

Whether one approves of multiculturalism or not, on a practical social level, a multicultural society is also a multilingual society. As such, it is difficult for one to preserve the mother tongue in a multilingual society. Although languages have survived in multilingual societies such as the United States, Canada and India, it is never an easy exercise. Also, it has its political and social consequences. However, as Stanley Lieberson rightly argues, in a multilingual society "although equality between linguistic groups is sometimes achieved in official political terms, it is rare either socially or economically. Moreover language differences are usually accompanied by racial or ethnic differences, thereby often becoming hopelessly entangled in broader issues" (3). This is also true in the case of Canada, where the linguistic divide is clearly defined by the ethnic and racial divide combined with its colonial past. While English and French have maintained the status quo, aboriginal languages, which are the original languages of the land, have by far been ignored; many aboriginal languages have become extinct, and whatever attempts are being made to save the surviving languages have come too late. On the other hand, universities have favored teaching of European languages such as German, Italian, and Spanish, among others, over Eastern languages. Teaching of Mandarin and Cantonese is now on the rise due to the changing global economic scenario. As for the South Asian languages, while universities in the United States are actively teaching them, Canadian universities are far behind. As Lieberson maintains, "when people with different languages are brought together under a common political entity, whether it be through voluntary migration or by means of conquest and invasion, generally one group is in a more favorable position than others, and likewise one language enjoys a stronger position in schools and the government, in the economy, and socially." This arrangement leads to a dispute and the resulting "conflict is often both longer and of greater severity in multilingual societies containing peoples who were overrun by an expanding group, in colonies, and in new nations whose boundaries were carved by European empire builders" (3-4).

Lieberson proposes three alternatives for people whose language is not the dominant language in their country of residence. The first is "to evolve toward the dominant group, to give up the native language and reduce – if not completely eliminate – the ethnic identity it often symbolizes" (4). He cites the example of immigrants to Canada as belonging to this first group. Secondly he suggests the reduction of "the handicaps facing speakers of a given language by reforming the societal institutions" (4). Educational, political, and economic reforms are needed to achieve this objective. The third solution, which he calls the "most explosive of all," is to abandon "the existing nation through outmigration, revolution, separatism, or expulsion of the dominant language group" (4). He cites French Canada's separatist movement as an example of the third solution. Lieberson maintains that "the surrender of distinctive mother tongues is a necessary step in the assimilation of ethnic groups in contact" (6). He argues that it is not possible for people to assimilate completely if they maintain their language and that maintenance of one's native language "provides an important shield against assimilation" (6). But he also adds that linguistic assimilation will lead to the death of the native language; thus, linguistic assimilation is not desirable unless and until one is willing to let the native tongue die. It is difficult to agree with Lieberson's claim that one cannot assimilate without surrendering the native tongue. In Canada people have easily maintained ties with their native tongue while speaking English or French outside of home. The writers writing in their native tongues are a clear example of this. Most of the writers have had a profession outside of writing which demands the use of an official language. Nonetheless, these writers have used their native tongue for creativity as either they feel more comfortable in their native tongue when it comes to expressing emotions, or they feel less competent in English or French. Nonetheless, their loyalty to their native tongue cannot be perceived as disloyalty to the official languages.

On the literary front, there are critics who favor the policy of bilingualism and biculturalism; for example, Ronald Sutherland writes:

> What, then, is a sphere of consciousness essentially and peculiarly Canadian? I should think that the main distinguishing feature would have to be dependent upon the main distinguishing feature of the Canadian nation – the coexistence of two major ethnic groups. To be in the emerging mainstream of Canadian literature, therefore, a writer must have some awareness of fundamental aspects and attitudes of both language groups in Canada. (qtd. in Bumsted 15)

Such statements neglect the aboriginal languages[22] as well as the parallel ethnic minority languages and literary cultures. But on the other side of critical spectrum are those that disapprove of this approach. Jonathan Hart recognizes that "Canadian literature owes much to classical, European and American literature as well as to the recovered traditions of the aboriginal peoples and other non-European groups" (Hart, "In the Mouth of the Canon" 147). Comparing the Canadian situation to that of India, Hart further contends that "Canadian problems of identity look like a mild luxury beside those of India, a country which includes at least two hundred and fifty dialects and languages that have long been spoken by large sectors of its population. Nevertheless, to find identity in Canada poses its own problems" ("In the Mouth of the Canon" 146-147). Linda Hutcheon, in the introduction to her book Other Solitudes, notes that "With the cultural diversity that twentieth-century immigration has brought to Canada have come both cultural riches and social tensions that move far beyond those of bilingualism and biculturalism" (2). Social tensions apparently are the issues of racial discrimination, feelings of non-belonging, issues of class and gender, etc. Then again, what I would like to focus on here is her emphasis on the cultural richness that immigrants bring about. According to Hutcheon, immigrants have changed forever our concept of what constitutes 'Canadian Literature.' Among others, she cites the example of South Asian writing in Canada. She asserts that "doubleness is the essence of the immigrant experience. Caught between two worlds, the immigrant negotiates a new social space; caught between two cultures and often languages, the writer negotiates a new literary space" (9). This new literary space has now given South Asian writers such as Rohinton Mistry, M. G. Vassanji, Michael Ondaatje, Shyam Selvadurai, Anita Rau Badami, and Bharati Mukherjee to Canada (and of course Bapsi Sidhwa, Tahira Naqvi, Madhu Rai to the United States, and Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi and Tariq Ali to the United Kingdom). Works of these writers have not only brought the cultures of different parts of the world to the people in the West, but they have made the religions, norms, values, and traditions of these cultures a known entity (how would people have known about the Parsi diaspora if not for Mistry's fiction?).[23] As Suwunda Sugunasiri puts it, "Canadian literature is an ocean fed by many a river in which flow the tears and joys of our 70 or so cultural groups." However, with the joys comes what Hutcheon calls "the fear of assimilation." Hutcheon maintains that in immigrant literature "the tension between wanting to belong to the new society and yet wanting to retain the culture of the old one obviously varies from person to person in intensity and emotional weight. But it is rarely absent" (12). Many a time the writers are nostalgic and create a picture of the homeland that is not very real; as Vijay Mishra argues: "diasporas construct homelands in ways that are very different from people of the homelands themselves. For an Indian in the diaspora, for instance, India is a very different kind of homeland than the Indian national" (424). Mistry's story "Swimming Lessons" seems to explain the writer's obsession with the 'home' country and why they tend to write about it. Kersi, the lead character, is thinking about how it will be when he gets old:

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[22] The situation of Native writers is not much different from the writers writing in non-official languages in Canada; Bumsted notes: "The native peoples, it would appear, represent neither a founding culture not an ethnic one, but exist in some special limbo of their own. Unlike other emergent minorities in Canada apart from the familiar ethnic ones – such as women – the native peoples do have languages of their own in which literary activity has occurred. They would appear to share many of the problems of the third-language writers in Canada" (17).

> What will I think of, old in this country, when I sit and watch the snow come down? For me, it is already too late for snowmen and snowball fights, and all I will have is thoughts about childhood thoughts and dreams, built around snowscapers and winder-wonderlands on Christmas cards so popular in Bombay; my snowmen and snowball

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[23] Besides literature, the complexity and the dynamics of Canada's modern multicultural society are certainly reflected in the arts, film, and media. It should be noted that in terms of culture, Canada has also been enriched in the fields of film and music. Deepa Mehta's Water was Canada's official entry to the Oscars in 2007 although the film is in Hindi. In music, Torontonian Adnan Sami, who blends the classical Eastern and Western musical forms, has been rocking the South Asian population around the world.

> fights and Christmas trees are in the pages of Enid Blyton's books, dispersed amidst the adventures of the Famous Five, and the Five Find-Outers, and the Secret Seven. My snowflakes are even less forgettable than the old man's, for they never melt. (Baag 254)

The memories that the writers have are like these snowflakes, they are there and they do not melt. And as long as they do not melt, they will define the writings of the diasporic writers. Uma Parameswaran beautifully analyzes the process of moving from 'there' to 'here':

> Every immigrant transplants part of his native land to the new country, and the transplant may be said to have taken root once the immigrant figuratively sees his native river in the river that runs in his adopted place; not Ganga *as* the Assiniboine or the Assiniboine as the Ganga, both of which imply a simple transference or substitution, but Ganga *in* the Assiniboine, which implies a flowing into, a merger that enriches the river … In the literary context of the immigrant experience this image has an added dimension. At the confluence, the rivers are distinct, and one can see the seam of the two separate streams as they join. (80)

An immigrant writer brings his memories with him/her and his writing, in turn, reflects the same.

Linguistic Hybridity

The term 'hybridity' has been used by various critics such as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, James Gifford, Homi Bhabha and Ian Chambers in several contexts. I employ the term close to Bhabha's employment , wherein he refers to a 'third space.' Hybridity in linguistics has been utilized to define the various changes that the language has gone through. The idea of linguistic hybridization basically comes from the interaction of various cultures, especially Indian and African, with the British Empire. Nevertheless, the mixed language that emerged out of these encounters was used negatively with many derogatory words to describe it.

Braj Kachru argues for the diasporic variety of English and questions, why not consider these varieties "as functionally viable part of our linguistic and cultural heritages?" (Asian Englishes 11). He asserts that this is "a heritage that has left indelible sweet-and-sour traces on our cultural and linguistic histories" (Asian Englishes 11). Kachru contends that the concepts of nativeness and non-nativeness of languages need to be redefined and reconstructed (Asian Englishes 11); I believe that we need the same in the Canadian context.

Linguistic hybridity is a post-colonial phenomenon; but, what started as a post-colonial phenomenon has now become a diasporic one. Writers who in their 'home' nations were using it to resist the empire are using the same in the 'host' nation to represent their culture and their hybrid identities, and trying to stay closer to their 'home' through the multiple use of languages. The dispute between English and heritage languages is decades old; writers in India and Africa have been debating the issue for a long time and there is no consensus at large. Writers such as Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao have embraced English and have appropriated it. Achebe, in his essay titled "The African Writer and the English Language," states:

> So my answer to the question *Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able use it effectively in creative writing?* is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: *Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker?* I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to may different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (433)

Raja Rao expresses similar sentiments:

> The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien,' yet English is not an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional

> make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English, we should not. (296)

However, when immigrant writers use different vocabulary to express themselves, people complain that they cannot understand the writing or that it is the writer's responsibility to make himself understood, but in a country such as Canada, "it is not only the immigrant who has to change his language but the whole country that has to stretch the frontiers of its vocabulary in order to listen to its immigrant imagination" (Parameswaran, "Ganga" 89). Unless and until fellow countrymen at least express the willingness to go a step further in being open to receiving the new works and words, it is very difficult for a writer in diaspora to become established. In the post-colonial world, language has mainly been analyzed from a 'power' angle; then again, in the diasporic context, language serves a different perspective. Appropriation of English may well be a part of the fight against linguistic imperialism, but language also serves the purpose of retention of memory, culture, and language itself. This is true in the Canadian context. One reason this discussion has not taken place yet in Canada on a national scale is that English and French have always been presumed as the languages of Canada; secondly, the fight between English and French has never subsided even after the policy of bilingualism. This fight has never let the other languages become a part of this debate. Nevertheless, the linguistic component of diaspora helps us understand the relation between culture, language, and diasporic identity as language is a cultural marker and "[E]mbedded in language use is information about status and identity" (Sonntag 1).

Canada has a long tradition of ethnic minority writing; tied very closely to this tradition is the idea of linguistic hybridity. For most of the ethnic minority writers, Language is a medium to negotiate both identities; that is, the nostalgic one or the alienated one. As much as linguistic hybridity is not only the realm of ethnic minority writers, as 'mainstream' writers such as Alistair MacLeod have also experimented with language, for ethnic minority writers it has inherent political, cultural, and emotional consequences. Immigrants' affiliation with language is quite special; Parameswaran writes:

> There is a relationship between the language one uses and the way one looks at life. One of the challenges to both a writer and a reader of immigrant literature is to acquire sensitivity to changes in the language and diction of the immigrant as he gets acculturated. Simplistically put, an immigrant moves from saying "I saw Paris and Rome" to saying "I *did* Paris and Rome." The nuances and [overt connotations] of the words we hear and use, our idiosyncrasies of speech and gestures, not only express our sensibility but influence and transform it. This transformation would be called "assimilation" or "copping out" depending on how one feels about the end product. However, I am not talking about values but about how fantastic it would be to write or read a novel that shows this transformation, especially if it does so without

> making the value judgments that immigrant literature tends to make. ("Ganga" 88)

But an immigrant writer is always under the microscope; he always has to prove his worth. A writer in diaspora has to go through a 'maturity' period, to use Vassanji's term, before he can be accepted; Vassanji elaborates on what immigration entails for the literary scene:

> But the term *immigrant* often suggests, not a person with a different cultural background or with varied experiences, travelled, and perhaps fluent in two or more languages, but one who has not quite made it. This is true in the West, for obvious reasons, more often of Third World immigrants and unfortunately also when literature is the subject under discussion. The term is then used somewhat condescendingly to describe a transition stage of no vital importance, a stage of growing up which we all have to go through before maturity. Such an attitude can come only from a cultural shortsightedness: an inability or unwillingness to see or relate to anything different. It reflects the failure to understand that current trends and styles are precisely those: few among many, subject to comparison and change and even reversal. (Meeting 2)

With the creation of new *ethnoscapes,*[24] it is hardly possible that a writer can confine himself to boundaries, whether geographic or linguistic; today's writers, and especially those Canadian writers who have had the privilege of spending some part of their life in a different nation-state, have varied experiences, and they utilize their knowledge and experience in their writing. In light of the above, in the following chapters I will analyze South Asian Canadian writing; but before that it is necessary to delve into a brief history of South Asian diaspora in Canada.

South Asians in Canada

The first wave of South Asians in Canada started in 1903 with a few immigrants landing on Vancouver Island; by 1908 there were more than five thousand South Asians in Canada. These immigrants were mostly the Sikhs from the Punjab province of India. They were mostly unwelcome and "the newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria described [them] as undesirable, degraded, sick, hungry, and a menace to women and children" (Johnston 6). Although [East] Indians were mostly filling in the jobs that were previously taken by the Japanese and Chinese, there was considerable resistance. With the increasing number came the insecurity felt by Canadian governments, which started by limiting their rights and denying them the federal vote. In 1908, a new rule was put in place by which the immigrants traveling to Canada had to have $ 200 and also had to take a continuous journey from their country of origin in order to be legally admissible to Canada. As there was no possibility of such a journey from India to Canada, immigration from India ceased; those who were already in Canada could not bring their families, and were isolated from their people back home. This not only created anger towards the Canadian government, but forced the community to find alternate ways of immigration to Canada. In 1914, a ship named Komagata Maru[25] came to Canada with over three hundred South Asians and landed on Vancouver Island; but, the occupants of the ship were not allowed to disembark and were secluded on the ship for two months. The sailors were then sent back. This had huge implications in British colonies where the sentiment against the imperial government became much stronger, especially given that some of the Komagata Maru sailors were officially British subjects having served in the military in the colonies.[26] Although in 1919,[27] the Canadian government did allow the family members of the existing South Asians in Canada to join them, the 'continuous journey rule' stayed in place until 1947. This not only stopped new immigration, but those already in Canada moved back either to India or migrated to the United States, eventually bringing down the number of South Asian migrants in Canada to less than fifteen hundred. The rule of continuous journey was abolished in 1947 after India gained independence from the British. In 1951, immigrant quotas[28] were put in place to let smaller number of South Asian immigrants in Canada[29]. It was during the second wave in the 1960s that the immigration from South Asia surged; also, people from provinces other than Punjab started to move in alongside people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka,[30] adding to the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity among the South Asians as well as Canadians at large. As opposed to earlier immigrants who were mostly from farming communities, the newer immigrants were mostly professionals – highly educated and competent. The third wave of immigrants of South Asian origin came about in the 1970s with political turmoil in East Africa. As the dictator Idi Amin expelled people of Indian origin from Uganda, many of them moved to Canada as refugees, while some moved to the U.K. Subsequently many people of Indian origin from various countries such as Tanzania, Kenya,

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[24] Arjun Appadurai, in his diaspora theory, describes five different –scapes, namely, ethnoscape, technoscape, financescape, mediascape, and ideoscape. Ethnoscape is "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrant, refugees, exiles, guestworkers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree" (32).

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[25] For complete history of the Komagata Maru incident, see H. J. M. Johnston, Ali Kazimi's documentary titled Continuous Journey also highlights the episode using archival documents and photographs. The documentary has received many awards, including two nominations for Gemini Awards.

[26] "By federal law, as British subjects long resident in Canada, most were Canadian citizens, but in British Columbia the provincial and municipal election acts denied them the right to vote" (Johnston, East Indians 11).

[27] Only nine women from India came to Canada between 1904 to 1920; until 1940, Indian population in Canada mostly comprised of men who landed between 1904 and 1908, that is until the 'continuous journey' rule put in place. For further details, see Hugh Johnston's The East Indians in Canada.

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[28] "Annual quotas of 150, 100, and 50 were established for India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka over and above the sponsored immigration category, which was extended to include elderly parents as well as spouses and children under 21" (Johnston, East Indians 11).

[29] Hugh Johnston compares the first wave of South Asian immigration to that of Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and French-Canadian in that they all "moved from a traditional setting to a foreign urban environment" adding that "unlike much immigration from rural England to rural Canada, fear of economic and social change was not a determining factor. The motive was money and the first Sikh emigrants, like Italian emigrants of the same period, intended to return, and they frequently did" (21).

[30] Sri Lanka has an interesting linguistic history; while there are mainly four ethnic groups in the country, namely Sinhalese, Tamil, Moors, and a mix of Malays, Burghers and others following different religions, linguistically Sinhalese, Tamil, and English have been the prominent languages, with a considerable population speaking English as their first language. English was the official language until 1956 when Sinhalese and Tamil were introduced as official languages. The conflict between Sinhalese and Tamil is ongoing, ethnically and linguistically. Michael Ondaatje, the well-known Canadian writer is of the Burgher background, which is a mix of Sinhalese, Tamil, and European lineage.

Guyana, and others settled in Canada; some also moved in from Fiji, the West Indies, Mauritius, and also from the U.K. As per the 2001 census, there were over 917,000 people of South Asian origin in Canada;[31] the majority of this population is of course from the province of Punjab in India.

Culture is a binding factor for South Asians; although there is a lot of diversity within the community, folk dances, classical music, and love of Bollywood films connects the community. In fact, Bollywood films have become very popular among the younger generation who now worship Indian superstars such as Aishwarya Rai, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Preety Zinta and many others. There are many social, cultural, and religious organizations catering to the needs of the community. Language instruction is a part of many such organizations; for example, Edmonton's Pakistan Cultural Associations runs Urdu classes on Sundays and Alberta Hindi Parishad teaches Hindi. Different language newspapers and tabloids also abound. While some regular TV channels feature programs in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and other South Asian languages, now people also have access to channels such as Zee TV, B4U, A4U, Asian Television Network (ATN) and others that bring them news, views, music, films, dramas, and other programs from South Asia, mostly India, through satellites. These TV channels, combined with Bollywood films, have also added to the second generation picking up languages from the films and other programs; since

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[31] For detailed history of South Asian migration to Canada, see Milton Israel; Rabindra Nath Kanungo,; N. Buchignani and D. Indra; and Hugh Johnston.

Hindi/Urdu is the language of these films, it is common for younger South Asians to have some knowledge of these languages.

CHAPTER II

You can make her out the way she speaks;
Her consonants bludgeon you;
her argot is rococo, her latest 'slang'
is available in classical dictionaries…
She will not stick to *vindaloo*, but talks
Of roasts, pies, pomfrets grilled
She speaks of contreau and not cashew
arrack which her father once instilled.
No, she is not Anglo-Indian…
She is Indian English, the language that I use.
Keki Daruwalla 'Mistress' (qtd. in Walder 49)

Braj Kachru has divided the global community into three circles based on their use of the English language, namely, the "inner circle," the "expanding circle," and the "outer circle" (Asian Englishes, 13-14). The "inner circle" consists of the countries where English is native to most of the population, such as the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (other than French Canada). The "expanding circle" is where English does not have a very strong hold but is fast moving towards becoming prominent; countries in this circle include China, Israel, Korea, Saudi Arabia and Russia, among others. The "outer circle" consists of those countries where English has a considerable hold but has also been appropriated and has many varieties of the same; these include India, Jamaica, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Singapore, and Nigeria. Globally, "despite the linguistic diversity of a world that features more than five thousand natural languages by some counts, a mere one hundred languages count for the mother tongue of 95 percent of the world's population, twenty-five languages for about 75 percent, and just twelve languages of about 60 percent" (Aravamudan 1). English enjoys the status of 'link language', globally; in Canada, despite the policy of bilingualism, English has superiority over French.

Writers writing in English in Canada would actually belong to the "inner circle;" but, the situation has not been that easy, since within Canadian literature now there is much experimentation with English. Writers have been influenced by the languages of their home countries and thus, if we take Kachru's model, in Canada the "inner circle" and the "outer circle" are overlapping. In fact, linguistically, the Canadian writer is in a unique position; as Sylvia Soderlind argues:

> Canada is 'colonized' in a specifically cultural and linguistic sense; the Canadian or Québécois writer has no other language than that of the perceived colonizer, whether English or French. No refuge is to be found outside the linguistic territory of the metropolis; no political gesture can be defiantly made by recourse to minority languages, and no common tribal or precolonial past can be conjured up as a challenge in the effort to establish a national/cultural identity. (4)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, hybridity is a result of two or more cultures and languages coming together. Thus, before I focus on different techniques writers have used within English, it is necessary to first take a look at how the English language originated and developed in the Indian subcontinent, because this is the English that South Asian Canadian writers have brought with them to Canada. English also has a certain history within Canada and that too needs to be studied.

English in the Indian Subcontinent

English has been present in India for over three hundred and fifty years, and today, India has the third largest English-speaking population next to the UK and the USA. English came to India in the 1600s with the English traders establishing themselves in the western province of Gujarat. With the advent of the British Empire and with the failure of the Moghuls, English was established in India in the eighteenth century. The British Empire lasted in India from the early eighteenth century to 1947. Colonization is a culture-altering exercise apart from being an economic and political one. A part of the imposition of western culture, the exercise began with the imposition of language, namely English. In 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay in his 'Minute on Education,' wrote:

> We are free to employ our funds as we choose; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing; that English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic; that neither as the languages of law, nor as the languages of religion, have the Sanscrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our engagement; that it is possible to make natives of the country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed [. . .], We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (qtd. in McArthur 308)

As a result of Lord Macaulay's proposal, English became the medium of education in the Indian school system. Soon after, in 1857, three universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. Eventually, English became a major language of the people of the Indian subcontinent. After the partition of India into India and Pakistan and subsequently, Bangladesh, Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali became the national languages of the respective nations, but English enjoyed an important position and still does more than ever.

While the South Asian countries are linguistically distinct, with languages from either the Indo- Aryan or Dravidian groups, English served as the *lingua-franca* during colonization and more so following decolonization. McArthur lists six causes that assisted in the mushrooming of English in South Asia, namely: commerce, British officials, missionaries, education, imperial government policy, and post-imperial government policy (310). English went through much Indianization with the passage of time. English in India today is a hybrid form mixed with various Indian languages and is affected by three factors: "level of education and proficiency; the characteristics of an individual's first or dominant language; and ethnic, religious and/or other cultural backgrounds" (McArthur 310-11). During British rule, hybridized English in India had been known by various names such as Boxwallah English, Butler English, Bearer English, Cheechee English, and Babu English; all generally known as 'pidgin'[32] English.

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[32] There is no agreement on the definition of 'pidgin' language, however, sociolinguist, R. Wardhaugh defines it as "A pidgin is a language with no native speakers: it is no one's first language but is a *contact language*. That is, it is the product of a multilingual situation in which

As Aravamudan notes, these new forms of English "first acquired recognition, paradoxically, when representatives of high Victorian imperialism dismissed it as a bureaucratic cant of the native functionaries and interpreters of the Raj" (4). The use of 'Indian Pidgin English' varies based on the person's educational, social background, and mother tongue; it is also influenced by ethnicity, caste, class, socio-religious dimensions and socio-economic groupings. Actually, "blending English with one or more other languages at various socio-cultural levels is not only common in India but entirely unremarkable, from high erudite discussions in Sanskritized English to haggling in bazaars, for which any combination of any available language will serve" (McArthur 317). However, this blending has been a site of controversy and thus, as Aravamudan notes, due to the issues of prestige and shame attached to it, English "represents a complicated status for South Asians that linguists have called *diglossic differentiation,* or the continual awareness of a relationship between high and low variations" (6).

Both India and Pakistan have always been rife with linguistic politics. In fact, after the partition of the two countries, the consequent partition of East Pakistan and West Pakistan into Bangladesh and Pakistan happened on linguistic grounds, with Bangladesh adopting Bengali as its national language and Pakistan adopting Urdu. Within India, in the south there is little interest in Hindi, India's national

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those who wish to communicate must find or improvise a simple language system that will enable them to do so. [...] In contrast to a pidgin, a Creole, is often defined as a pidgin that has become the first language of a new generation of speakers [...] A Creole, therefore, is a 'normal' language in almost every sense" (qtd. in Jenkins 10). See McArthur, Kachru, and Crystal for more information.

language. Dominated by Dravidian languages such as Malayalam, Telugu and Tamil, south India is clearly divided from the rest of the country on linguistic grounds. In fact, this linguistic divide has thus given the English language the status of *lingua franca*. Then again, every province has its own official language as well. Thus it is common for an average Indian to know Hindi, the national language (this is not always true in case of southern Indians), a provincial language, and have some or sound know-how of English.

Although after decolonization the status of English in India has remained controversial, with opposition coming mostly from the nationalists, people with knowledge of English do enjoy a sort of 'elite' status in the society. It is also true that current 'outsourcing' of technological work to India from countries around the world, especially the U.S., is a result of India's strong use of the English language. The Indian economy has benefited greatly from this 'outsourcing' which would have not happened without the knowledge of the English language. As R. Radhakrishnan writes,

> in practical terms, the ascendancy of English in India took place at the expense of the growth and propagation of other languages and literatures in India. Although one did live in a multilingual world, the lingual world provided by English carried with it the privilege of dominance and the reputation of effective globality and internationalism. (xvi)

In India, English has become the tool of what Radhakrishnan calls "cultural modernization (xvii). Today, with the passage of time and the process of globalization, English is no longer frowned upon and has become a tool for upward social mobility. The English that we now hear in India on college and university campuses, on television dramas and news channels, on the streets and corners of cities, is not 'pure' Standard English of the British era. What we now hear is Hinglish – a mix of Indian languages with English. Baljinder Mahal, a Derby-based teacher, has recently published The Queen's Hinglish, a dictionary of hybrid English. In Britain, the 'hybrid-fever' is catching on and is becoming more and more acceptable in informal school conversations. For the people of the Indian subcontinent, though, this mixed language has become a unifying factor; whether they speak Hindi or Urdu or Tamil, conversations that are a mix of these languages with English or vice versa are far too common. This hybridity relates to the common imperial history that the people share.

On the literary front, while India has a very strong tradition in vernacular languages, Indian writing in English has reached new peaks in the last couple of decades. As David Damrosch observes, in India,

> world literature takes on a very particular valence in the dual contexts of the multiplicity of India's disparate languages and the ongoing presence of English in post-Raj India. English can be seen in comparative terms as three distinct entities in India: as the language of the British literature that featured so prominently in colonial Indian

> education; as the worldwide phenomenon of contemporary global English; and as Indo-English with its ambiguous status somewhere between a foreign and a native language. (What is World Literature? 26-27)

Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, which won the Booker Prize, raised the stature of Indian writing in English to new heights; Roy's book used Malayalam extensively. Experimentation with language in Indian writing in English began with the writings of Raja Rao in the 1930s. R.K. Narayan, the renowned Indian writer, who also experimented with the English language, says of his use of English:

> English has proved that if a language has flexibility any experience can be communicated through it, even if it has to be paraphrased sometimes rather than conveyed, and even if the factual detail […] is partly understood. In order not to lose the excellence of this medium a few writers in India took to writing in English, and produced a literature that was perhaps not first class; often the writing seemed imitation, halting, inept, or an awkward translation of a vernacular rhetoric mode or idiom; but occasionally it was brilliant. We are all experimentalists […] We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language, through sheer resilience and mobility, is now undergoing a process of Indianization in the same manner as it adopted U. S. citizenship over a century ago, with the difference that it is the major language but here one of the fifteen listed in the Indian Constitution. I

> cannot say whether the process of transmutation is to be viewed as an enrichment of the English language or a debasement of it. All that I am able to confirm, after nearly thirty years of writing, is that it has served my purpose admirably . . . (qtd. in Desai iii)

The experimentation in Indian writing in English has been received both negatively and positively. On the one hand, there has been a huge uproar against any writing in English in post-independence India, because English was an 'alien' language, and using English after the British left was considered indicative of the 'slave mentality;' on the other hand, writing in English, as well as experimentation with the language, was welcomed. John Spencer calls this experimentation "an important and quite salutary new dimension to English studies," which "linguists and literary scholars, as well as historians and social scientists, ought to recognize and explore" (qtd. in Desai iv). The process of the Indianization of English has indeed acquired an "institutionalized status" (Kachru 293).

Indian writers have made deliberate use of grammatically incorrect English, whether it means, using present progressives or code-mixing or repetition; Nissim Ezekiel, the renowned Indian poet, wrote the following poem titled 'The Patriot' to assert his 'ownership' of English:

> I am standing for peace and non-violence
> Why world is fighting fighting
> Why all people of world

> Are not following Mahatma Gandhi
> I am not simply understanding. (qtd. in Gargesh 106)

While the debate around whether one should write in English or heritage languages, whether to follow Achebe or Thiong'o, is unending, writers of the Indian subcontinent in their 'home' countries or in the diaspora are becoming more and more comfortable with English, albeit an appropriated one. Pritish Nandy wrote that English is "a language of our own, yes, an Indian language, in which we can feel deeply, create, and convey experiences and responses typically Indian" (qtd. in Gargesh 106). And thus Indian writers both in India and in diaspora have created in this language of 'their own.'

English in Canada

English is one of Canada's official languages, French being the other. As mentioned earlier, The Official Languages Act of 1969 established Canada as a bilingual nation. However, the relationship between French and English has always remained political. Although officially Canada is recognized as a bilingual country, much of Canada's population, which is composed of immigrants from all over the globe, is proficient in a language other than one of the official languages.[33] Thus, on a social level, Canada is multilingual. On the other hand, English still remains the most spoken language in Canada, at least outside of Quebec. Canada's acquaintance with English (as well as French) is centuries old. According to David Crystal, "The first English-language contact with Canada was as early as 1497, when John Cabot reached Newfoundland; but English migration along the Atlantic coast did not develop until a century later, when the farming, fishing, and fur-trading industry attracted English-speaking settlers" (95). Given that French has also existed in the country since the 16th century, the English language in Canada has always been in conflict with the French language. French has also influenced the development of English.[34] With the rise in immigration from England in the eighteenth century, English gained more prominence over French. Also, the English-speaking population of the country increased with the coming of the Loyalists from the United States in the eighteenth century. Moreover, after the Treaty of Paris, and the ceding of New France to Great Britain, many more English-speaking people came to Canada. Thus, "the presence of French as a co-official language, chiefly spoken in Quebec, produces a socio-linguistic situation not found in other English-speaking countries" (Crystal 340). In fact, McArthur argues that "a cardinal feature of Canadian English is therefore co-existence (or co-occurrence) with Canadian French, much as a cardinal feature of South African English is co-existence (or co-occurrence) with Afrikaans and such African languages as Zulu or Xhosa" (224).

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[33] The Official Languages Act of 1969 officially declared Canada as a bilingual country.

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[34] David Crystal makes an interesting note of this: "Most of Canada's lakes (outside of Quebec) have been named according to the English pattern: Rawhide Lake, Elliot Lake, and Quirke Lake, for example, are all to be found in southern Ontario. But a few miles further south we find Lake Huron, with the generic term preceding. Why is it not Huron Lake? The answer lies in the considerable influence of French throughout the early period of exploration. The French patterns, seen in such Quebec names as Lac Dumont and Lac du Fils, has been used in all the Great Lakes (and certain others, such as Lake Winnipeg). French also influenced the general vocabulary. Most of the words which entered English in those early days seem to have come from French or from American Indian languages via French, such as Esquimaux (1548), canoe (1576), caribou (1665), and the vocabulary of the fur trade and its pioneers. The name of the country itself has such an origin: Canada is recorded in the journal of the French explorer Jacques Cartier in 1535 as the name of one the Indian kingdoms along the Saguenay River (though the Iroquoian word he encountered, Kanata, probably meant no more than 'village')" (95).

Canadian English is equally influenced by British English as well as U.S. usage, and thus, there is very little agreement on what comprises standard Canadian English. McArthur argues that "in terms of speech, Canadian usage is fairly homogenous, the strong exceptions being the Maritimes and especially Newfoundland, with some distinctiveness in Quebec as a consequence of French" (223). This homogeneity has come mostly through the use of standard pronunciations used on radio and television, especially the CBC. As Crystal contends, at a local level, "several dialects have been recognized, and although few signs of regional grammatical variations have yet been identified, there is an appreciable amount of lexical divergence" (343).

Alongside French and English, exist the indigenous languages[35] and heritage languages. Of the 29.6 million people in the 2001 census, 6.7 million Canadians, that is, approximately 17.6% of the population reported a non-official language (language other than English or French) as their mother-tongue. According to the census figures, over four hundred thousand people had no knowledge of either English or French. South Asians comprise the second largest visible minority group with the population close to a million, and they speak Hindi (65,895), Gujarati (60,105), Punjabi (280,565), and Urdu (89,370) among other languages.

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[35] Although many indigenous languages have become extinct, many languages such as Cree, Ojibwa, and Inuktitut still exist. But as Tom McArthur notes in The Oxford Guide to World English, "currently, by and large, Native Canadians speak hybrids of their own languages and English" (210).

Canadian English has been influenced by the different languages that exist in Canada. In fact, as McArthur writes, "despite the dominance and wide distribution of English, it has not been easy for scholars to delineate and agree on regional aspects of Canadian English, and no statement about them is likely at present to be free from dispute" (224). Many of the words in Canadian English are related to "fur trading, lumbering, mining, and local flora and fauna" (Crystal 342). McArthur argues that "because distinctive groups have tended to concentrate in particular areas, vernacular hybrids are common, as for example *Italese* in Toronto and the ancient mix of English, French, and Native Indian spoken among the Métis" (208). As much as hybrid English has peaked in the UK, it is still a developing tendency in Canada. There is also a growing trend of words being imported from South Asian languages. It is not difficult to find words such as *tandoor, tandoori, guru, gurkha, samosa,* or *nan* in the Canadian Oxford dictionary. This movement is going to be on the rise thanks to writers of South Asian origin in Canada, who use the hybrid language very freely in their works. In fact, this hybridity is not at all a shelter of just South Asian Canadian writers. Rather, writers from all backgrounds have been using this for a while now. Thus Alistair MacLeod uses Gaelic in his writing, Tomson Highway is happy to blend Cree with English, Frank Paci mixes Italian with English; Hiromi Goto likes to use Japanese; and so on and so forth. Canadian English, especially literary English, is going through a change; proponents of 'pure English' are not going to be happy about this, but there is little that can be done to stop this.

South Asian Canadian Writing in English

While South Asian Canadian literature in English has existed for over four decades, it is also a growing field. Names such as Michael Ondaatje, M G Vassanji, Rohinton Mistry, and Anita Rau Badami are now quite well known, but many others have contributed to building this wing of Canadian literature. Poets such as Himani Bannerji, Suniti Namjoshi, Arnold Itwaru, Uma Parameswaran, and Cyril Dabydeen, fiction writers such as Reshard Gool, Bharati Mukherjee, Neil Bissoondath, Samuel Selvon, and Farida Karodia; or dramatists such as Rahul Verma and Rana Bose are among those who have given South Asian Canadian writing its plural identity. Many new faces are emerging - among them are Anosh Irani and Anar Ali. Given that there is a lot of religious, regional, linguistic, and cultural diversity within the group, their literature has become the reflection of the same. As Diane McGifford writes, they "do not come tabula rasa nor with begging bowls in hand, ready to be re-fashioned as Anglo- or Franco-Canadians, but as vibrant, talented people, schooled in the literary forms of their indigenous and adopted languages, in the vernacular forms of English, and in the traditional forms of English literature" (ix).

Given that in Canada, South Asian immigration in the real sense started only in the 1960s, a majority of writers that are writing are still first generation immigrants, although second generation immigrants, that is, those born to immigrant parents, such as Anar Ali, are now coming up. So unlike Britain, which has now seen an influx of second generation writers such as Monica Ali and Zadie

Smith, the focus of the Canadian writers has either been exclusively on the 'back home' or on the immigrant issues of alienation, loss or resentment; this may change as more second generation writers come up.[36]

One aspect that is most commonly found in the works of these writers is the use of South Asian English.[37] In spite of this, when these writers use hybrid English, they are not using any one heritage language in their writing. Even for the writers originating from India, there is no single pattern. Mistry uses Gujarati (mostly Parsi dialect),[38] Selvadurai uses Tamil, and Badami uses Hindi. Vassanji, on the other hand, uses Swahili, Gujarati, and Kachchi in his writings. Given the regional, cultural, and linguistic differences in South Asia, the linguistic hybridity that these writers adopt in their writings also reflects these differences. Mistry's use of Gujarati mirrors the cultural milieu of the Parsis in Bombay, while Selvadurai echoes the Tamil identity. These writers are following in the footsteps of writers from the Indian subcontinent who have experimented with the language starting during the colonial period and thereafter in the postcolonial era.

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[36] Even with the second generation writers, the focus may not always change. Floya Anthias with reference to British born second generation immigrant writers, notes: "Much of the literature on issues of migration and ethnicity has tended to see them as being 'between two cultures' or they have been researched in terms of their assimilation or integration within mainstream society and the extent to which they retain the culture of their parents" (621).

[37] I use the term South Asian English in the same way that Braj Kachru, who first coined the term, describes the term. He writes: "I shall use the term South Asian English to refer to the variety of English used in what has traditionally been called the Indian subcontinent. The label *South Asian English*, unlike *English in South Asia*, suggests a parallel with variety-oriented terms such as *American English* or *British English* and implies a historical tradition and institutionalization, as well as distinct formal and functional characteristics" ("South Asian English" 353).

[38] Parsis generally speak accented Gujarati. As they came from Persia, initially their Gujarati had a Persian touch; however, with the passage of time, it became a distinctive mark of the Parsi identity by itself. Mistry uses this distinctiveness when his Parsi characters talk.

Standard English versus Appropriated English

The debate around the use of English as a medium of writing has been raging in the post-colonial world for a long time now. While English came to countries such as India and Africa as a result of colonization, it has stayed on, in fact in the case of India, with a much stronger hold than during the colonial period. In the pre-independence days in India, standard English was the norm, and a way of being considered 'highly educated' and thus belonging to the elite society; in post-independence India and especially in the last decade, hybrid English has not only become acceptable but a norm. The media promotes it and people adopt it in their day-today conversations. Advertisements for multinational companies such as Pepsi, Coca-Cola and MacDonald's are full of hybrid jingles such as "Hungry kya?" (are you hungry?) or "Yeh Dil Mange More" (this heart asks for more). News reading on major television channels is no longer in standard English or Hindi; the news is read in a hybrid language, mostly Hindi peppered with lots of English. Given the current reality of language use in the Indian subcontinent, the South Asian experience cannot be articulated in standard English.

Since the early twentieth century, writers have been arguing whether the use of the English language is appropriate for a writer in colonized/decolonized territories. The tradition of using heritage languages within English writing started in India with Raja Rao's Kanthapura and was followed by R. K. Narayan and other Indian English writers. Salman Rushdie gave it an international acceptance with Midnight's Children; Rushdie not only used language to 'write against the empire' but to recreate cultural experiences. Subsequent Indian writers have felt very comfortable writing in a hybrid language.

While the issue seems to be subsiding in the former colonies to an extent, now the newest debate in language politics has shifted to the writers in diaspora. So the writers of Indian origin living in countries such as the United States, Britain, and Canada are the newest targets of this dispute. The relevance of this hybridity in non-colonial nations and decolonized nations is at times questioned. I will discuss this at a later point, but the question of whether one should write in one's mother tongue or in the adopted language is a tricky one. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who gave up English and chose to write in his native tongue Gikuyu, argues that using the colonial language is equivalent to approving of imperialism; he asks why "should an African writer, or any writer, become so obsessed by taking from his mother-tongue to enrich other tongues? Why should he see it as his particular mission? We never asked ourselves: how can we enrich other languages?" (286). For Thiong'o, language is a means through which the mind is colonized and spirit subjugated (286).

A writer in diaspora has to choose between the language of the 'home' country or the dominant language of the adopted country, but there is a peril in adopting the latter. As Joseph Pivato warns, "there is always a danger in adopting the language of the dominant group" because of "the possibility that the writer will consciously or unconsciously internalize ideals and modes of expression foreign to his or her own historic reality" (Echo 53). Pivato argues that writers "must try to retain, reconstruct, or invent out of their acculturated existence their own stories" (53). But instead of treading the slippery path of this quarrel between the mother-tongue and English, most writers in the post-colonized and diasporic communities have chosen the middle path – while they write in English, they have appropriated the language. This has led to a mixed response: on the one hand, they are attacked for defiling the English language; on the other hand, they are hailed for enriching the language and writing back to the empire or hegemony of English.

While linguistic hybridity is relevant in post-colonial cultures, it is equally relevant in nations with cultural plurality. Canada is a nation made of various cultures, and literature is a mode of holding ties with the motherland and mother tongue. In Canada various writers have raised the issue of 'language politics' either directly or indirectly through their literary works. Canadian writers of various ethnic backgrounds, such as Roy Kiyooka, Hiromi Goto, Frank Paci, Rohinton Mistry, Jeannette Armstrong, Lee Maracle, Dionne Brand, Makeda Silvera and others have spoken and written against linguistic imperialism in various forms. Most of them have grieved the loss of their mother tongues and the imposition of the mainstream English or French. By advancing their arguments they fight against the policy of bilingualism and for the retention of their language(s). For example, Dionne Brand clearly challenges the concept that language is neutral. In her work titled "No Language is Neutral," Brand argues that language is a constant struggle that an immigrant encounters – it serves as a negotiation between the nostalgia world and the real world; at the same time, she stresses the political nature of language:

> There it was anyway, some damn memory half-eaten and half-hungry. To hate this, they must have been dragged through the Manzinilla spitting out the last spun syllables for cruelty, new sound forming, pushing toward lips made to bubble blood [. . .] Hard-bitten on mangrove and wild bush, the sea wind heaving any remnants of consonant curses into choking aspirate. No language is neutral seared in the spine's unraveling. Here is history too. (269-270)

Roy Kiyooka, the Japanese-Canadian writer, also has his reservations against the hegemony of the English language. In his essay titled "We Asian North Americanos: An unhistorical 'take' on growing up yellow in a white world," he sarcastically elaborates on his love-hate relationship with English and laments the loss of his childhood language – Japanese:

> Everytime I look at my face in a mirror I think of how it keeps on changing its features in English, [tho] English is not my mother tongue. Everytime I've been in an argument I've found the terms of my rationale in English pragmatism. Even my anger, not to mention my rage, has to all intents and purposes been shaped by all the gut-level obscenity I picked up away from my mother tongue. And everytime I have tried to express, it must be, affections, it comes out sounding halt. Which [thot] proposes that every unspecified emotion I've felt was

> enfolded in an unspoken Japanese dialect, one my childhood ears alone remember. Furthermore, everytime I've broken into my own ofttimes unwelcome but salutary silences, I've been left with a tied tongue. All of which tells me that every time a word forms on the tip of my tongue, it bears the pulse of an English which is not my mother tongue. There's English 'English'. There's American 'English', paging Dr Hayakawa. Then, there's our kind of, callit, Canadian 'English', not to mention all the other English-speaking folks in the rest of the world, regardless of their race, colour, or creed. For good or bad, it's the nearest thing we have to a universal lingua franca. Unless the ubiquitous computer with its fearsome but cold-blooded logistical games has already usurpt its primacy. Having said all this, I would simply add that none of the above has anything to do with what I can say in my mother tongue. (40)

Italian-Canadian Antonio D'Alfonso is not far behind in his mourning for the loss of language:

> Not the trip to a land where words are pronounced as you are taught to pronounce them. Not the adage your grandmother severs you at dinner. The language you speak as a child, flushed down the toilet bowl. Your mother-tongue sounds as foreign to you as any language you do not understand. Forgotten as the life-style you once had. Latin engraved on darkened school desks. What do you tell yourself when you find yourself alone at night? (277)

At times it is simply not possible for the writers to express some things in English; for example, Tomson Highway, who writes in English but appropriates the English language with Cree, explains the difference between Cree and English and how English fails to convey what he wants to:

> In the English, Italian, French, German, and other European languages you can't help but make comparisons between the distinct linguistic histories and traditions. The most amazing thing that I find about the European languages that differs from us is that in Cree there is no gender, whereas in the European languages you always have to deal with the male/female/neuter hierarchy. The Cree and the other native languages are structured in such a way that we look at the universe not according to that hierarchy but according to a dichotomy consisting of that in the universe which is animate, which has a living, breathing spirit, and that which is inanimate, which has no living, breathing spirit, so that by that system, a human being, a man, a woman, a tiger, a tree, even a rock are all structured in such a way that you would address a tree on the same level as you would address a man or a woman or a cat. Contrariwise, if you cut that tree down and you take that piece of wood, this piece of wood for instance, this has no living, breathing animate spirit and therefore this is inanimate, and only then do you refer to it as "it." (Morgan 135)

Highway, in his play Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing, has his characters speak a mix of English and Cree and complain about the inadequacies of the English language:

> ….weetha….Christ! What is it? Him? Her/ Stupid fucking language, fuck you, da Englesa. Me no speakum no more da goodie Englesa, in Cree we say "weetha', not "him" or "her" Nanabush, come back! (110-111)

Highway is much concerned about the loss of native language and culture; in another of his plays, The Rez Sisters, his characters speak in Cree whenever Nanabush, the trickster figure, is sighted. Nanabush represents Native mythology, and he/she can speak only in Cree, to identify the culture that has been lost with the coming of the settlers to North America. In fact, in Dry Lips he symbolically shows the rape of Native language and culture, and the resulting loss of identity. In The Rez Sisters, when the characters speak English, it is usually broken English, to symbolize the one that is actually spoken on the reserves. Maria Campbell, another Métis Canadian writer, also uses broken English, and explains her use of appropriated language:

> A lot of my writing now is in very broken English, I find that I can express myself better that way. I can't write in our language, because who would understand it? So I've been using the way I spoke when I was at home, rather than the way I speak today […] what linguists call "village English." It's very beautiful […] very

> lyrical, but it took me a long time to realize that [...] it's more like oral tradition. (qtd. in Usmiani 130)

Hiromi Goto, in Chorus of Mushrooms, uses Japanese mythology and language. Mark Libin, in analyzing Goto's employment of Japanese in *Chorus of Mushrooms*, argues that she "challenges the reading habits of what Miki terms "the majority" by refusing to translate Japanese passages, and in such a way whether directing a certain portion of its narrative to the "more limited perspective of the community" or to the elf-motivated reader as active translator" (122). In fact, Goto's characters seem to be struggling all the time with language; as Murasaki, the principal narrator of the novel, puts it, "I learned Japanese because now I can juggle two languages and when there isn't one word in English, it will be there in Japanese and if there's something lacking in your tongue, I'll reach for it in English. So I say to you in English. I love you, Obachan" (54).

Caribbean Canadian writing is also rich in linguistic diversity. In it "New accents are heard, new linguistic structures are practiced, and new aesthetic forms are retrieved from countries past. Clarke's Barbadian 'broad-talk' (language spiced with swear words), Brand's Trinidadian 'tag-talk' (French- or Yoruba-influenced tag phrases), and Lillian Allen's Jamaican 'dread-talk' (Rastafarian form of Jamaican English) contribute to the medley of voices in Canadian literature" (Bucknor 178).

In all, the preoccupation with language and linguistic hybridity are not unknown to Canadian ethnic minority writer. As Sandahl asserts, "The English used by immigrant writers may not please critics of the literary establishment" (137). However,

> Writers are free: if our experience and our creativity demand that we beat and crush and subvert a language be it so. We don't have to be ashamed. The beating, the crushing, and the subversion will mould and enrich it. The result may not look neat and clean, disinfected, aseptic, and homogenized. But creation was never a tidy process. (Sandahl 137-8)

The writers are certainly not ashamed, and are unapologetic about the subversion of the English language. Vassanji's characters are a reflection of linguistic hybridity in his writing; here is what the narrator has to say of the same in the novel The Gunny Sack:

> In Dar, at Amina's house, we said Tanzania is different, its Asians more truly African. Indians have been on the coast for centuries, and they speak English – Amina attested, having come from abroad – *quite* differently from Indian Indians. There is a distinct Swahili-ness to their English. And ask them, she exhorted, the Indian term for bakuli, or machungwa, or ndizi, and you'll catch them at a loss, As for their brand of Swahili: first, there are several brands, from the bad (kuja-*ne*! or kuja-*to*!) to the good – which if you want to hear, go and talk to Mama

> Ji-Ji opposite the market; and second, have you heard the Swahili the Africans speak in Nairobi (eti, kula maji! Or: mutu mubaya!)? And who would deny that a chapatti, or a samosa or a curry were not Coastal food? Even biryani. And have you seen the furniture of a traditional Swahili home? There you'll see Indian influence. And have you heard a Zanzibari taarabu? Hum it for an Indian and he'll give you the words in Hindi. There. (245)

Amina's mother in the same novel speaks "the Zanzibari Cutchi-Swahili mix" (253).

The South Asian Canadian writer is thus a part of a group of ethnic minority writers who constantly question and reclaim the language, and in doing so, create a hybrid literary world of their own. But before going any further, first let me take a detailed look at South Asian Canadian writers' experimentation with language to understand where they stand

CHAPTER III

I am Indian, very brown, born in
Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
Two, dream in one. Don't write in English, they said,
English is not your mother tongue. Why not leave
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
Any language I like? The language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
It is as human as I am, don't
You see?

-Kamala Das in The Old Playhouse and Other Poems (qtd. in McArthur 311)

The objective of this chapter is to look into the ways in which some of the major South Asian writers in Canada have experimented with the English language. As explained in the introduction, I have confined myself to the fiction of Rohinton Mistry, M. G. Vassanji, and Anita Rau Badami, although I will be drawing from other South Asian Canadian writers. I will concentrate mostly on Mistry's Tales from Firozsha Baag, Family Matters and Such a Long Journey, Vassanji's No New Land and The Book of Secrets, and Badami's Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? and Tamarind Mem. While some may question grouping Vassanji with other South Asian writers, I think it is justified as he is of Indian origin, speaks Indian languages (Cutchi and Gujarati), uses Indian languages in his writing and is overall at ease with India. He mentioned in an interview that South Asians "have a certain kind of ancestral affinity" and that he thinks that the South Asian writers are probably grouped together because of their "racial configurations." He added: "I feel closer to people in India than to South Asians from the Caribbean. When I go to India, I can speak the language. We were more in contact – East Africa and India – than the Caribbean and India were" (Fisher 59). My approach here will be mostly linguistic. The aim of this chapter is to analyze different techniques that writers use as they mix heritage languages with English. Then I will examine the various incentives behind this experimentation. I will prove that while these writers continue writing in the post-colonial tradition, the aim in a pluralistic country such as Canada is culture retention, resistance, and nostalgia. Culture retention by far is also connected with identity formation – both cultural and national.

Post-colonial texts signify difference in many ways – through thematic variance, in nomenclature, or through their depiction of places. Yet, language is their primary site of difference and "it is in language that the curious tension of cultural 'revelation' and cultural 'silence' is most evident" (Ashcroft et al., Back 58). Some of the techniques that post-colonial writers use in their writing are allusion, glossing, use of untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion, code-switching, and vernacular transcription. At times a glossary with explicated vernacular words follows the text, but at times there is no glossary, instead, the author explicates the word or phrase within the context. Sometimes there is neither glossary nor explication; the writer may italicize the vernacular words. Another way of incorporating vernacular words is neutralization through code-mixing (Kachru 292). By using these different strategies of the post-colonial writers, what South Asian Canadian writers have created is different varieties of English which are unique. It is necessary to analyze the techniques first in order to appreciate the linguistic hybridity in the texts. In order to do so, I will first resort to Mikhail Bakhtin's philosophy of language; Bakhtin used the term 'hybridity' "to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multivocal language situations and, by extension, of multivocal narratives" (Ashcroft, Key Concepts 118).

Bakhtin is not in favor of studying stylistics; he laments that the "basic social overtone is ignored" in the study of language and that the study of stylistics in fact "ignores the social life of discourse outside the artist's study, discourse in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages, of social groups, generations and epoch" (259). Bakhtin suggests that language is composed of various social languages and is not made of one unified component. He argues that "the novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice. In it the investigator is confronted with several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often located on different linguistic levels and subject to stylistic controls" (261). Thus he defines the novel "as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (262). Bakhtin further contends that all language is dialogic; language is made of several social occurrences which give language its distinct meaning. Thus, unlike monologic theories of language, Bakhtin does not treat language as free of societal milieu; as he puts it, language is marked by

> social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour . . . . (262-63)

In fact, Bakhtin sees language as heteroglossic. Heteroglossia is "the simultaneous use of different kinds of speech or other signs, the tensions between them, and their conflicting relationship within one text" (Ivanov 95). Heteroglossia is against monoglossia and polyglossia. Further, heteroglossia enters the novel through "[a]uthorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters" and their links and interrelationships "permits a multiplicity of social voices" (263). However, Bakhtin argues that language is dependent on two poles – the system of unitary language and the individual speaking in this language; that is, centripetal and centrifugal forces. Unitary language which is opposed to the language of the individual, is "an expression of the centripetal forces of language;" these forces are "opposed to the realities of heteroglossia" and "unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia" (270-71). Unitary language is again determined by certain forces; Bakhtin names these forces as:

> The victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the True Word, the incorporation of barbarians and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, the canonization of ideological systems, philology with its method of studying and teaching dead languages, languages that were by that very fact "unities," Indo-European linguistics with its focus of attention,

> directed away from language plurality to a single proto-language . . . (271).

Conversely, since language is also marked by heteroglossia "[a]longside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (272). The unitary language is thus the official language and socially powerful, whereas the individual language is unofficial and does not enjoy the same prominence. Individual languages are social phenomena and "co-exist in the creative consciousness" of people and "evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia" (Bakhtin 292). Thus, these languages "are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel, which can unite in itself parodic stylizations of generic languages, various forms of stylizations and illustrations of professional and period-bound languages, the languages of particular generations, of social dialects and others" and "[t]hey may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions and values" (292).

By appropriating words or using them in order to create a discrete multilingual sentence, one makes the language one's own; Bakhtin argues that "[t]he word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language" (293-94).

Ethnic minority writers in Canada have created a literary world where various languages co-exist, thus creating a heteroglossic world. While French and English enjoy the official status or the position of a unitary language, the rest of the languages which I term 'heritage languages' (as defined in the introduction of this dissertation) occupy a secondary position. I use the term 'heteroglossia' to exemplify not only the co-existence of languages in Canada, but also the struggles – political as well as cultural – that go along with this diverse existence. In Canada, along with the co-existence of French and English, various social dialects exist. This is clearly reflected in the differences of speech as we go from one province to the other. Not only that, a different linguistic world exists as we move from one ethnic community to another. These communities are marked by a kind of heteroglossia which mixes the official languages with the language of the ethnic community. This is further broken down by the different dialects within the language of this community; thus, if one were to enter the world of the South Asian community, alongside English or French (depending on where one is) there is an intermingling of South Asian languages, which may range from Hindi to Urdu to Tamil or even Swahili for those who have come via Africa. Add to this the fact that Hindi has a different speech pattern depending on where the speaker is originally from – as a speaker from Bombay will speak a different dialect than the one from Delhi. The same situation is applicable to any other ethnic community in Canada, whether Chinese, Italian, Japanese, or any other. This aspect is reproduced in the way the ethnic minority writers exemplify their characters who speak in a way that is not only different from the 'mainstream' but also depending on their cultural, social, and economic background. Linguistic hybridity is clearly a way for these writers to set apart this difference. According to Bakhtin, this strategy is especially pertinent for the novel:

> The stratification of novel [. . .] upon entering the novel establishes its own special order within it, and becomes a unique artistic system, which orchestrates the intentional theme of the author [. . .] Diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organize themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre. (299-300)

South Asian Canadian writers create a polyphonic world through the use of what Braj Kachru calls 'World Englishes' or 'New Englishes,'[39] thus making the language "their own" by appropriating the words.

By creating an atmosphere of various accents, and various grammatical situations, these writers add to the heteroglossic world inhabited by their characters. While no language is neutral, literary language is especially not. South

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[39] According to Kachru, 'New Englishes' or 'World Englishes' "symbolizes formal or functional variation, diverse sociolinguistic and pragmatic contexts, and canons and canonicities that the English language embodies in its global multilingual and multicultural contexts. The emphasis is on pluralism, not on the dichotomy between 'us and them'." Also, the term 'New Englishes' "is primarily used for the varieties of English which have developed in the Outer Circle. All such varieties – which exist in practically every continent are transplanted and have therefore also been labeled 'diaspora' varieties" ("New Englishes" 520).

Asian Canadian writers' use of different dialects is a political act; these dialects "on entering the literary language and preserving within it their own dialectological elasticity, their other-languagedness, have the effect of deforming the literary language" (Bakhtin 294). However, this deformation is what the reader has to live with, as the unity of a literary language is a "highly specific unity of several "languages"" (Bakhtin 295). South Asian Canadian writing is primarily the result of linguistic and sociocultural contact of various languages and cultures and thus it is a product of a multicultural and multilingual creativity (Kachru, "New Englishes" 522).

As Kachru mentions there are two ways by which contact[40] literatures in English establish themselves - 'nativization' and 'acculturation.'[41] Below, I analyze the different ways by which South Asian Canadian writers have constructed a social and linguistic world by use of different linguistic techniques. As I probe into these techniques, I prove how social and cultural meanings are created in a text through the medium of language, and how the heteroglossic world of these works is marked by these techniques. It is noteworthy that although these writers use similar strategies, it is not possible to come up with a universal South Asian English lingo because of the linguistic variations in the subcontinent itself. Thus, Mistry uses Gujarati and Hindi, Vassanji uses Cutchi, Gujarati and Swahili, Badami uses Hindi and Punjabi. Although all the writers experiment with the English language, their use varies on the base of their mother tongue. Although there are certain features of South Asian English which are common around the subcontinent, pronunciation of words varies from region to region; based on the mother tongue of the speaker, there is difference in the use of vowels, or the rhythm of the word. Writers have experimented in various areas – lexicon, syntax, phonology, morphology. Desai identifies certain strategies for Indian writing in English. These tactics are also the ones that South Asian Canadian writers use: "one, that of using a number of native words; two, that of using translations of certain characteristic expressions, idioms, and sayings; three, that of imposing the syntax of the native language without, however, doing great violence to English grammar; four, that of imposing the native speech rhythms on the English language spoken by the Indian characters" (vi). These strategies are continued in Canada as the South Asian Canadian writers are mostly depicting Indian characters and locales. Appropriated English or decolonized English is able to showcase the cultural side of India and Indian thought and culture.

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[40] "The term 'contact' highlights the multicultural and multilingual contexts in which [New] Englishes are used, and the impact of local and sociolinguistic contexts" on the varieties of New Englishes. The transfer "manifests itself in pronunciation, lexis, grammar, discourse, speech acts, and stylistic strategies" (Kachru, "New Englishes" 521)

[41] As Kachru explains, "Nativization refers to the formal textual features of such creativity, and acculturation to the thematic or contextual localization of such writing. Nativization contributes to linguistic processes which are localized and provide an identity to the text [. . .] On the other hand, acculturaltion of texts is a matter of cultural identity which English acquires by its Africanization or Indianization. The two processes together mark the New English literatures as being distinct and give them identities separate from the canons associated with British and American literatures. It is in this sense that the New Englishes have expanded the literary and cultural cannons of English" ("New Englishes" 523.)

Code-switching

Most South Asian Canadian writers are either bilingual or multi-lingual. Given the cultural structure of the countries in which their characters are placed, the characters are also bi or multilingual. Code-switching – switching back and forth between linguistic codes - has become one of the standard features of this writing. Code-switching is "the use of two or more languages in one speech exchange by bi or multilingual speakers" (Bailey 238). In terms of contact code-switching has been identified as both a linguistic as well as a social occurrence. As Bailey elaborates, "Language is the central semiotic tool for representing social reality and transmitting sociocultural orientations, and in multicultural, multilinguistic contexts, particular codes are often associated with particular social roles, relationships, institutions, activities, and ideologies" (238). Thus code-switching mirrors social practices as well as cultural alterations, especially in multilingual countries such as Canada and India. The nature and extent of code-switching again depends on the nature of social structure. For example, the second or third generation diasporans have recourse to both the language of the 'home' as well as the 'host' country and thus "straddle national, linguistic, and ethnic boundaries" (Bailey 239). As a result, code-switching in second-generation diasporans is "often frequent, intra-sentential, and unmarked in intra-group peer interactions, an emblem of identity for individuals who live simultaneously in multiple social and linguistic worlds" (Bailey 239). Code-switching is one of the most frequently used techniques when it comes to using different languages. Code-switching happens either in the narrative itself, or is extensively used in the dialogues. Switches may either be in the form of full sentences or as different words inserted in English sentences. As much as there is more than one language involved in this, these languages "do not *exclude* each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways" (Bakhtin 291). The novels of Mistry, Vassanji, Badami, and other writers are a good example of switching languages with Standard English – the vernacular language varies with the writer's background as well as the characters' background. For example, in Badami's Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? Bibi-ji who is a Canadian immigrant from Punjab mixes Punjabi with English, Yet Leela, who is from South India and has mixed parentage – Indian father and German mother – speaks more Standardized English. Mistry's characters speak Gujarati and Vassanji's speak Swahili, among others. The following passages are demonstrative of Mistry's use of code-switching:

> She fled the room, followed by Phoola, who seemed pleased with the dramatic effect of her discovery. "You see, bai? I cannot work in that smell? I am not a mahetrani who cleans toilets and goo-mooter. (Family Matters 73)

Or,

> The two men were panting, and sweat poured off their faces. They smelled terrible, thought Coomy, recognizing them from the ration shop, where they carried bags of grain home for customers, their muscles for hire. Mustn't be strong ghatis, she felt, if the weight of one medium-built old man tired them.
>
> "What are you waiting for?" said Jal, frantic. "Chalo, bring him in! Nahin, don't put him on the floor! Sofa ki ooper rakho! Wait, maybe

> inside on the palung is better." He led them to Nariman's room. "Theek hai, gently, that's good." (Family Matters 47)

The exercise of code-switching in both of the above passages also establishes the class difference. In the first passage, the maid, who belongs to one of the lowest class structures, exercises her power when she realizes that Coomy, her mistress, has no choice in the face of her father having soiled the bed, but to clean it herself. In refusing to clean the soiled clothes and bed, not only does the maid establish the clear line of what she will and what she will not do but also puts herself at a higher class structure than the 'mahetrani;' that is, the 'untouchables' in Indian society who mostly do the job of cleaning people's toilets. By asserting that she is not a 'mahetrani' the maid puts herself on a higher pedestal but further becomes a victim of the class structure of which she is also a part. In the second passage Jal is talking to the 'ghatis'[42] who are perceived as the lower class in Bombay society. Ghatis are the laboring people who are not treated very well in the social structure. By using a very authoritative tone in Hindi – 'chalo' (come on), 'theek hai' (OK), and 'sofa ke ooper rakho' (put him on the sofa), Jal establishes his authority over the 'ghatis.' Here heteroglossia enters the novel "through the "authorial speech, the speeches of narrators;" the differing voices of Coomy, Jal, and the maid "permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" (Bakhtin 263). Vassanji too is no stranger to the technique of code-switching; the following passage clearly demonstrates this:

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[42] The term 'ghatis' is mostly used to refer to laborers from other provinces; many people from all over India flock to Bombay looking for work.

> The one who picked me up to bring me inside the cabin one day was called Tembo. He was a Goan, brown as cinnamon, and was called Tembo to mock his extreme thinness. If he ate more ghee he would make engineer, eh, Tembo? the Sardarji engineer teased. Osnu andar aantå deyo, he said to my two companions, with a gesture toward me, Dekhan ta deyo, Let him come inside and see, these days who's interested in trains, it's all aeroplanes for the little guys. And so, as I clambered up, the two old men pushed me along, and Tembo the fireman, teeth gleaming like pearls, pulled me into the cabin.
>
> Young man, began the Sardarji in English as I stood gaping inside. You are inside the injuneer's cabin, from where the whole train is controlled. Kadi esa vekhyan hai? The train-brain, ye . . . es, this is the brain of the train. And I am the brain of the brain. Brain-brain – ha-ha! (65-66)

Vassanji here also foregrounds the multi-ethnic nature of the African society as well as the multi-cultural immigrant group. Here the linguistic multiplicity reflected through code-switching "outlines the complexity of the society" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 74). In the following exchange he switches between English and Punjabi:

> What was the marriage ceremony like? Papa asked.

> Dada said, The Medicine man sprinkled the couple with water, they had to wear leaves and walk around, and then they went to spend the night in the hut.
>
> Wah, said Papa with a sigh.
>
> You sound regretful you didn't marry a Masai, Mother reprimanded.
>
> He put his arm around her, gave her a squeeze. You are my Masai woman, na.
>
> One of those heartwarming moments between them, when Mahesh Uncle was not around.
>
> But she speaks Punjabi! Deepa said.
>
> Better than me, said Papa.
>
> Ha sahiachi to bolti hai, Dadi said.
>
> Dadi explained how, in Nakuru, she had taught Punjabi ways to the Masai girl. (40)

As Joseph Clara argues, the vernacular version of English "is often characterized by code-mixing, code-switching, and an irregular use of high and low varieties of diction that ultimately succeed in capturing the singular schemata of the land and its varied cultures" (133). The above examples demonstrate that by code-switching these writers are not only able to decentralize the unitary language, which in this case is English, but are also able to create the language of an individual. As Mary Louise Pratt contends,

> In the context of fiercely monolingual dominant cultures like that of the United States, code-switching lays claim to a form of cultural power: the power to own but not be owned by the dominant language. Aesthetically, code-switching can be a source of great verbal subtlety and grace as speech dances fluidly and strategically back and forth between two languages and two cultural systems. Code-switching is a rich source of wit, humour, puns, word play, and games of rhythm and rhyme. (qtd. in Wah 68)

The South Asian Canadian writer is able to bring in the cultural variety in his/her writing by code-switching.

Untranslated Words:

Another strategy that South Asian Canadian writers use is untranslated words. As Ashcroft and others explicate the untranslated word "has an important function in inscribing difference" (Empire 52). Very specific cultural experiences are difficult to replicate in English, but they are needed to the specific situation. Untranslated words "are directly metonymic of that cultural difference which is imputed by the linguistic variation" (Empire 52). Cultural difference is especially marked through the names of food items, clothing, and rituals. Let us first take a look at some of these culturally-distinct terms that mark the uniqueness of the regions and religions involved.

Food

At times, local words are brought in just to keep the distinctness of culture; this is especially true when it comes to food. It is not only difficult to translate the culinary names, but these words lose meaning if at all forced into translation. For example, in the following passage Mistry uses names of different dishes that are very specific to Parsi culture:

> Her morning had started early: she had got the children ready for school and packed their lunch; cooked *dhandar-paatyo* and *Sali-boti* for dinner; starched and ironed his white shirt, trousers, and *dugli*, all washed the night before, and her white blouse, petticoat and sari. ("Auspicious Occasion" Baag 14)

Sali-boti is mainly meat curry, and *dhandar-paatyo* is an Indianized Iranian dish consumed mostly by the Parsi community in India. This reference is related to food, but also correlates to the Parsi identity as Parsis are originally from Iran but have lived in India since the eighth century. In this case, food signifies Parsi identity.

Badami also chooses to use food specific words in her novels; some examples include "hot phulkas" (Badami Nightbird 6); "samosas" (Badami Nightbird 56); "Chholey-bhaturey" (Badami Nightbird 57); "jalebis" (Badami Nightbird 134). These food items are specific to India and clearly identify the culture that is being portrayed. In fact, the food culture in India is very colorful as well as showy. It is common for food to be displayed by the food-vendors on hand-pushed moving carts. This display is a part of India's social culture. The following passage from Mistry's Family Matters clearly identifies this world of culinary display:

> The *bhel-puri* stall was a sculptured landscape with its golden pyramid of *sev*, the little snow mountains of *mumra*, hillocks of *puris*, and, in among their valleys, in aluminum containers, pools of green and brown and red *chutneys*." (emphasis added to denote the words related to food items; 6)

While it is possible to translate the above words, translation would absolutely fail to establish the distinctive Indianness that is attached to the above words which are largely Indian junk-food items; for example, 'chutney' may be translated as 'relish' but cannot really express the cultural aspect attached to the food item which is used to add spice and heat to any item or is served as a side dish to enrich the spiciness based on a person's choice.

Rituals:

Mistry especially uses terms that are very specific to the Parsi rituals. Thus words such as "Behram Roje" (Baag 9)"Afargaan" (Baag 20) "chasni" (Baag 19) "agyaari" (Baag 21) "kustis" (Journey 107)"ovarnaa" (Journey 75), which are used throughout his works, are there to create a Parsi identity. Parsis are a fast diminishing community with only some hundred fifty thousand of them around the globe. Mistry's use of these ritualistic terms is an attempt to write Parsi community and their rituals into history. Vassanji uses ritualistic terms such as 'mohor,' singing 'bhajan,' and Gujarati dance form 'rasa,' among others.

Clothing:

Culturally discrete clothing is a marker of any community; for example, a sari identifies any woman as belonging to a South Asian community. Thus writers have chosen to not translate words that are specific to clothing. For example "faded kameez" (Badami Nightbird 6); "achkan" (Badami Nightbird 64); "dhoti" (Badami Nightbird 80); "dugli" (Mistry, Baag 10); "pheytoe" (Mistry Baag 10) "choli" (Mistry Baag17).

Expressions:

South Asian languages carry several expressive terms that vary from region to region and language to language. In order to evoke the specific cultural environment, writers have used expression terms in the original languages; it is not possible to translate these terms without losing the Indian experience. For example, the terms such as "hmmm," "Ohhoho" which resonates with the South Asian way of double stressing, or "Ay-ay-yo" in the following are examples to the point. While some expression terms are common across regions, some are very region-specific, as, say, "Ay-ay-yo" which clearly marks the character as belonging to southern India.

- "Let's see a smile! Killee-khilleee!" (Badami, Nightbird 8);
- "What has your mother made for us, hmmm?" (Badami, Nightbird 10);
- "*Ohhoho, they went, look at her strut, what pride . . .*" (Badami Nightbird 21);

- "There are lines of parents waiting for men such as this one, hanh!" (Badami, Nightbird 26);
- ""Ay-ay-yo!" exclaimed Leela" (Badami, Nightbird 90)

Expression terms such as 'are' and 'yaar' are also very common, especially in northern and western part of India, and thus are commonly found in Mistry's works.

Names of streets and roads

Names of streets and roads are generally not translated: "Bhindi Bazaar" (Baag 19); "Lohar Chawl" (Baag 19); "Tar Gully" (Baag 49) are some examples.

As the above examples elucidate, leaving the words untranslated "not only registers a sense of cultural distinctiveness but forces the reader into an active engagement with the horizons of the culture in which these terms have meaning. The reader gets some idea about the meaning of these words from the subsequent conversation, but further understanding will require the reader's own expansion of the cultural situation beyond the text" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 64). The device of not translating the words also "illustrates the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts" and "is a clear signifier of the fact that the language which actually informs the novel is an/Other language" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 63). In the context of post-colonial writing "the choice of leaving words untranslated . . . is a political act, because while translation is not inadmissible in itself, glossing gives the translated word, and thus the 'receptor' culture, the higher status" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 65). However, in a multicultural society such as Canada, by not translating the non-English words, these writers mark their texts as culturally different while informing the 'mainstream' about the cultures in other parts of the world. The untranslated word "seems to be keeping faith with the local culture and transporting it into the new medium" and "the sounds and the textures of language can be held to have the power and presence of the culture they signify – to be metaphoric in their 'inference of identity and totality'" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 51). The untranslated word creates a certain element of unknown in the text, leaving the reader grappling to understand the meaning; it is as if the writer is denying the ease of comprehension to the reader, thus carrying the marks of a marginalized culture.

Use of Glossary or Overt Cushioning

Another way by which writers put the non-English terms in the text is that of overt cushioning, is "where the explanation for the lexical item is given in the text" (Talib 128). Writers at times resort to using glossaries to explain the terms that they have used in the text. It is a writer's choice whether he or she wants to gloss the words, or resort to cushioning or not. Yet, "when an author resorts to explanations or glossaries, or avoids them, questions of communicative purpose, which are intimately connected to the work's readership, will arise" (Talib 128). Also, who the writer is writing for may at times be a decisive factor in this matter. By not providing any glossary or cushioning, writers risk losing their readers, who may not always be amused by the lack of understanding that this may lead to; still, it is not a barrier either. Talib cites the example of Arundhati Roy, who acquired an international readership in spite of extensive use of Malayalam in The God of Small Things (129).

While Vassanji chooses to give a glossary, Mistry avoids it.[43] Instead, Mistry opts for overt cushioning, thus making the context clear within the text. For example, in the following sentence, Mistry does not translate the Hindi words; In spite of this, from the context it is clear that the untranslated words are swear words:

-"*Saala Gandoo!* Filthy son of a whore! Shameless animal – spitting *paan* from the bus! Smash your face I will, you pimp . . . " ("Auspicious Occasion" Baag 25).

The same goes for this sentence:

"Arre` you sisterfucking *ghatis*, what are you laughing for? Have you no shame? *Saala chootia* spat *paan* on my *dugli* and you think that is fun?" ("Auspicious Occasion" Baag 25).

Mistry does resort from time to time to explicit translations; for example, in the following sentence he translates the complete sentence:

""*Bawaji*, we'll break all your bones. *Maaro saala bawajiko*!" Beat up the bloody *bawaji*" ("Auspicious Occasion" Baag 25). Mistry italicizes the Hindi words to draw the reader's attention to the linguistic difference. Mistry catches the Persian accent of the Parsis in his writing. What is interesting to note is that while Mistry, in his first book, Tales from Firozsha Baag, italicizes the non-English term probably in an attempt to draw attention to the words, in his latest book, Family Matters, he does not italicize the words or even make a very active attempt to offer cushioned or uncushioned translations in the text. This is clearly a political statement on the part of Mistry. Now with his established status not only on the Canadian but a global level, he is unapologetic about the linguistic hybridity in his works.

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[43] Citing the example of Trinidadian author Sam Selvon, who does not add glossaries and believes that "the explanation, if needed, should be found in the text," Talib argues that "while some indigenous words or expressions may be clear from the text, some others may be difficult to comprehend for non-Trinidadians, and these have to be sacrificed" (128).

By contrast, Vassanji generally uses a glossary; at the end of The Gunny Sack, for example, he has given a detailed glossary of all the non-English words he uses in the novel. Vassanji also specifies in this glossary the language that the word belongs to, and gives explanation of some words that have been influenced by other language. Of the use of this device Vassanji writes in the 'Author's Note' to his novel The Gunny Sack:

> The non-English words – which are mostly in Swahili or Cutchi-Gujarati – are intended to be integral to the text. In most cases their meanings are obvious in context, or explicit. The Glossary provided should be useful, but I hope it is not so necessary as to become an impediment. In using it the reader should bear in mind that the meanings given are particular to a place, time, and group of people and might not agree with dictionaries. I have also taken liberties with language, using 'Swahili' or 'Kishwahili' and English plural forms for

> Swahili words. Thus: Mshenziz, Mdachis. These usages have nor been entirely uncommon. (vi)

Again in the 'Author's Note' at the end of The In-Between World of Vikram Lall, Vassanji writes: "My usages of Kishwahili (or Swahili), Kikuyu, Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati should be self-explanatory in their contexts" (404). In The Gunny Sack, the non-English words are embedded in the text. Vassanji does not use italics for the non-English words as he provides a glossary, nor does he translate them in the text. As he explains,

> I use the words and phrases in a way that I can understand myself, so the language feels natural, but I'm not translating. There's a technique to it – saying something another way, using repetition, or giving half the sense in one language and half the sense in another language; but basically maintaining the rhythm and continuity is essential. (Fisher 56)

Vassanji is quite explicit about the use of heritage languages in his works. Explaining his use of the glossary in No New Land, Vassanji says that

> I'm interested in languages and I like to know the origins of words. There's an overlap between Swahili and some Indian words, because they have a common origin in Arabic. Take, for example, *safari*, the Swahili word. In Gujarati it would be *safar*, and in Arabic I think it is similar. And *safari* is now also an English word. It is all so fascinating. Language travels as people do. (56)

In his interview with Susan Fisher he mentions that writers were "compelled" to use glossaries in the early days of writing; but, as he says, Rushdie's coming on the international stage changed the scenario. However, Vassanji also uses non-English words because as he says he "feel[s] the need because I like to explore words and their relationships to peoples and places, and their histories" (Fisher 56). Vassanji has argued that whether a writer wants to provide a glossary or not is nothing more than a matter of choice: "I think that at this stage, in the literary world we are living in, it is a matter of choice whether to use italics or not, whether to have a glossary at the end or not. It's not really an argument any more, we all are much more secure. There are no metropolitan censors any more" (Fisher 56). But this choice may not be that innocent after all, as Mistry did start out italicizing, and it is only after having established himself thoroughly in the Canadian literary scene that he stopped; an established writer certainly has more power than an upcoming one. As Michelle Keown argues in her article on the politics of language in Maori writing, the choice to not italicize or translate is a refusal of a minority writer to translate for the majority; she quotes Patricia Grace who also stopped translating at the later stage of her writing:

> [Writers] of small population cultures must have the same freedom as other writers to be true to what they know and true to who they are. I need to be free to write in the way that I judge best for the stories I want to tell. I want my writing to be able to stand with the rest of the writing of the world without encumbrances such as glossaries, italics,

> footnotes, asides, sentences in brackets, introductory notes, or explanatory paragraphs disguised as plot [...] I do not italicize [sic] because the words are not "foreign" to me or my characters and are indigenous to my country. (qtd. in Keown 421)

Nonetheless, Mistry's choice of not italicizing is more political as the words that he uses are not indigenous to Canada.

Anita Rau Badami very subtly deals with the issue of language acquisition in her novel Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? One of the characters, Bibiji, who lives in Punjab, marries a Sikh living in Canada; after the marriage her husband arranges for her to have English lessons from a "gori memsahib" – white lady Mrs. Hardy who lived in India at the time. He also asks her to learn to read and write Gurbani at the Golden Temple. He writes to his wife the following in a letter: "*It is important to know where you are coming from and where you are going. For this you need both languages, the language of our soul and that of the goras. This way you will be a two-edged sword"* (33). Badami's idea of having command over the language of 'home' and 'host' countries is well reflected in her novel's characters as well as in her writing herself, wherein she utilizes the appropriated English. Badami, in fact, much in line with an average Indian ideology which connects knowledge of English with elite identity, also links knowledge of English to modernity; Bibiji was "determined to become a modern woman with two tongues in her head: one to do business with the goras who ran the distant country that awaited her and the other to deal with her own people"

(33). The name 'Bibiji' was also a marker of appropriated language; Bibiji's name was actually Sharanjeet, but:

> It was her husband who was responsible for the new appellation. He had a variety of affectionate nicknames for her – Honey, Rani, Bebby. The last was the one that had stuck. He really meant to say Baby, like the characters in the romantic Hollywood movies he loved to watch, but his Punjabi accent interfered and messed up his English. People in their small Punjabi community, who weren't sure what this word meant, tagged on their own marker of respect and called her Bebby-ji. And soon "Bebby-ji" became a word used so frequently that, like a stone worn small and smooth with caressing, it was turned up by the constant touch of many tongues to Bibi-ji. She did not mind the transformation. The term meant Wife, and that was what she was; the respected wife of a respected man. It went well with Pa-ji, which was how Khushwant Singh was addressed by the newly arrived immigrant men over whom he presided like an older brother. (40)

Badami chooses neither to italicize nor to give a glossary of terms she uses.

Other Strategies:

Some other strategies that writers employ in order to appropriate English are as follows:

Kinship words/Address words

Addressing people by their first names is not very common in South Asian culture; in fact, it may also be taken as a sign of insult. South Asian writers are very mindful of this when they create their South Asian characters. Also, based on the language one is using, there are various ways of addressing close kith and kin. For example, 'bwana' is a very common Swahili address term; this term, meaning 'Sir,' was initially used to address the British colonizers. With the passage of time it entered the everyday life of people and became a common address term; thus, different characters in Vassanji's The Gunny Sack are addressed as "Bwana Khalfaan" (35), "Bwana Wasi" (30) or "Bwana Dhanji." This in fact reflects on the diasporic identity of Vassanji's characters. These characters are of Indian origin, especially hailing from the province of Gujarat; in Gujarat they would have been addressed with a suffix of 'bhai' which literally means 'brother.' Yet, given that these characters are in Africa, Vassanji has replaced the suffix 'bhai,' with a prefix 'bwana' as this becomes a signifier of their diasporic identity. In a similar manner, Mistry uses Parsi address terms such as "Bawa" (Baag 18) "Dustoor Dhunjisha" (Baag 20) "Dustoorji" (Baag 21). These words are very specific to the Parsi community; within India if one is addressed as "Dustoorji" it would be clear that one is a Parsi priest. It should be noted that "Dustoor" is also a common last name and so "Dustoorji" can also be used to address somebody whose last name is "Dustoor;" in that case suffix '-ji' would be a mark of respect. A suffix such as 'ji' or 'sahib' or 'ben' or 'bhai' is attached to names as a mark of honor; addressing somebody with a first name unless and until he/she is a close friend and of the same age group is not considered socially polite, in fact, it may be considered insulting. Badami's Bibiji and Paji are also examples to the point. Badami uses various terms of address for the closely related: thus, "Bappa" (Nightbird 11) meaning father; "putthar" (Nightbird 11) meaning son; "Amma" (Nightbird 12) meaning mother; "Akka"(Nightbird 80) meaning father. Badami's use of these terms of address is again common in India; thus, even when one is talking in English, they would address their close relatives with the above words and not use terms such as "Daddy" or "Mom" or names for sons or daughters. These words are thus very specific to the cultural milieu of South Asia and are common to all the regions.

Repetition/ reduplication

Repetition is quite common in Indian languages and is generally used to emphasize a word or a point; this is very typical of Indian linguistic culture. Writers have used repetition excellently to evoke the Indianness in the text. Mistry uses repetition of words to bring out that Indian style of emphasis. Repetition in Indian languages, especially Hindi and Gujarati, is fairly common. Mistry gives a very discrete touch to his Indian characters by using the device of repetition. This also bears with the rhythm of many Indian languages and adds to the "native sensibility" (Desai 6). For example:

-"Arre` who does he think he is abusing us, giving such bad-bad *ghali*?" ("Auspicious Occasion" Baag 25).

-"So crowded it was, people running all around, shouting, screaming, and coolies with big-big trunks on their heads" ("The Ghost of Firozsha Baag" Baag 47).

-"I'll also come. I can eat walking-walking. Good for stomach and digestion" (Journey 94).

-"Nothing, nothing." She tried to sound calm. "Something for cooking. If you drink it your stomach will get worse" (Mistry, Journey 141).

Repetition in the above sentences is used either to show a character's anxiety or to emphasize a point.

Hybridized Lexicon

A hybridized lexicon is formed when a local language word is mixed with English to create a new word. For example, in the following sentence Badami coins a new word by mixing the Indian word 'dupatta,'[44] meaning a long scarf, with the English suffix '-ful':

> It was not good for business, Bibi-ji knew, but she counted on The One Up There to witness her act of kindness and grant her a *dupattaful* of blessings." (Nightbird 62-63, emphasis added)

Hybridized lexicon is a frequent strategy used by South Asian Canadian writers.

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[44] Dupatta is a long scarf that Indian women generally wear with the Indian costume of Salwar-Kameez which is a baggy kind of pant with a long shirt. The term can be literally translated as scarf full of blessings; it means bountiful.

Double words

Use of double-words is a very popular device; this works to juxtapose the very unique Indian way of speaking. For example: In reply to his wife's complaint that gunga had not come for work, Rustomji in "Auspicious Occasion" replies: "Arre` forget your *gunga-bunga*!" (Baag10). Badami makes use of the same device in her novel: "They were old hands at *gup-shup* and welcomed Paji's loud interventions from his station at the cash register" (Badami Nightbird 61, emphasis added).

Nomenclature

Mistry plays on the names of the characters. His characters are named so as to reflect certain characteristics of their personalities and identities, or even for identification. So 'Tehmul Langda' of Such a Long Journey is named so as to reflect his disability. 'Langda' means 'lame' and thus plays also on the status of a disabled person in society that has attached the disability as a suffix to the name. Miss Kutpatia of the same novel is another such name which would be lost to a person lacking in knowledge of the Gujarati language. 'Khutput' is a Gujarati word which implies poking into other people's affairs; turning the word around with a Parsi accent and making it 'Miss Kutpatia' makes the characters shortcomings clear to the reader with knowledge of the language. Here is how Mistry describes Miss Kutpatia:

> But there were not many in the building she could talk to about her bones, or anything else, for that matter, because of the reputation she

> had acquired over the years, of being mean and cranky and abusive. To children, Miss Kutpitia was the ubiquitous witch of their fairy stories come to life. They would flee past her door, screaming, "Run from the *daaken*! Run from the *daaken*!" as much from fear as to provoke her to mutter and curse, and shake her fist. Stiff bones or not, she could be seen moving with astonishing alacrity when she wanted to, darting from window to balcony to stairs if there were events taking place in the outside world that she wished to observe. (10-11)

While these writers have experimented with the language, the question of linguistic appropriation has not escaped their characters either. The way English and especially English names are distorted in the routine life of the Indian masses is well reflected in Mistry's story "The Ghost of Firozsha Baag." A maid named Jaakaylee is telling a story of the sighting of ghost. She gives the explanation of name thus:

> Forty-nine years in Firozsha Baag's B Block and they still don't say my name right. Is it so difficult to say Jacqueline? But they always say Jaakaylee. Or worse, Jaakayl. All the fault is of old *bai* who died ten years ago. She was in charge till her son brought a wife, the new *bai* of the house. Old bai took English words and made them Parsi words. Easy chair was *igeechur*, French beans was *ferach beech*, and Jacqueline became Jaakaylee. Later I found out that all old Parsis did this, it was like they made their own private language. (47)

Peter Morey analyzes Mistry's use of names in Such a Long Journey; Mistry's names show

> an insistent concern with the slippery, manipulable nature of language, and how reality can often be very different from appearance. This is nowhere more evident than in the nature of names and naming. Characters adopt and discard names, give and take nicknames, and find that certain names stick, while others are forgotten: the bank manager, Mr. Madon, has a secret first name that no one knows; old Mr. Cavasji did have a nickname, the 'watermelon', but shed it along with the pounds as he aged; Ghulam Mohammed knows Jimmy as 'bili-boy', while the latter uses the anagram Mira Obili when communicating with Gustad incognito; and Dr. Paymaster, who treats Roshan's unnamable illness, is completely in thrall to nomenclature when he finds that his patients will not allow him to replace the name of the previous doctor on the sign outside his surgery with his own. (78)

The technique of using language specific names for characters is common in many writers of South Asian origin.

Tag questions

In the South Asian variety of English, many times there generally is a tag question attached to a statement in place of an interrogative sentence. As Kachru identifies, "There is a contrasting polarity in such structures: a positive main clause is followed by a negative tag and vice versa" (Asian Englishes 49). Again the tag questions are generally made up of some specific words such as "yes?" "no?" "henh?" or "isn't it?" For example:

-"If I cut work they might not get a very good impression of me, no?"(Nightbird 114);

-"Well, Colonel, this *is* a country of immigrants, no?" (Nightbird 124);

- "Says that it is nothing compared to your Mysore coffee, henh?" (Nightbird 133).

Tag questions are very common in day-to-day conversations in South Asia, and South Asian Canadian writers have used them to their advantage.

The use of limiter/qualifier

The use of limiter/qualifier, such as 'only,' is again very common in South Asian English:

-"They thought they were like British only, ruling India side by side" (Baag 49).

-"Very nice! Take her side against your husband. Always against me only" (Journey 69).

-"Mua` tjief! In the hands of the police only we should put you! When they break your arms we will see how you add water!" (Mistry, Journey 10).

"If something happens," she said, preparing as always for every catastrophe imaginable, "we can run out fast and the police will be there nearby also" (Badami, Nightbird 224).

‘-ing’ construction

Another feature found in some varieties of English is the frequent appearance of the ‘-ing’ construction which is normally avoided in standard or other varieties of English. For example, Mistry uses the construction very often for that distinct Indian touch. In the story “Auspicious Occasion”[45] when Rustomji calls his wife, her reply is:

“Coming, coming! Two hands, so much to do, the *gunga* is late and the house is unswept” (10).

The breach of rules of grammar is a regular phenomenon among diasporic writers.

English plural form for native words

Vassanji generally makes use of this device; for example, he uses the plural English form in the word “chakas” to denote the plural of the word “chako” (meaning a six in terms of runs in the game of Cricket).

Some other strategies include the use of present progressive with stative verbs; the interchange of subject and verb in interrogative sentences (“You like this furniture?” (Badami, Nightbird 117); the use of grammatically incorrect conversation; the switching of number and tense; and local proverbs mixed with English.

As much as the above list of strategies and their relevant examples is not exhaustive, it serves well to demonstrate the various possibilities of experimentation within language and how these possibilities have been explored by the South Asian Canadian writers. The use of what Crystal calls "Global English" is becoming a standard practice in literature. This can be perceived as a positive or negative aspect depending on how one looks at it; David Damrosch in his 2003 book What is World Literature? explains this:

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[45] From short story collection Tales from Firozsha Baag

> "Global English" may come to mean nothing more than a minimum competence, a bland, watered-down commercial and touristic language whose use could dampen down the linguistic richness of English even in its original home locales. Alternatively, English can be enriched as it finds new uses around the globe, and literature has a critical role to play in this process. (225)

The extent of the use of heritage languages varies from writer to writer within the South Asian Canadian group. Rohinton Mistry uses the device to the maximum; Vassanji is also fond of it. While most of the writers, be it Badami, Irani, Selvadurai or Ondaatje, employ heritage language to a certain extent, there is quite a bit of disparity in their use. The use also depends on the setting of the novel. Since Mistry's novels are set in India, mostly Bombay, his use is frequent, however, Michael Ondaatje's works are rarely set in his country of origin and thus his use of the technique is minimum.

Resistance

Marshall McLuhan claimed that the medium is the message. If this is true, the language which is a medium ought to pass on some message too. What message are South Asian Canadian writers trying to express through the means of a hybrid language? As established above, language is positioned within the framework of diaspora, memory, and resistance. For these writers, language is a channel by which the past is retrieved. As Canadian writer Marlene Nourbese Philip argues, Standard English "must constantly be acted upon, destroyed and reconstructed in order to create a language that neither destroys nor obliterates history, identity, or self-constructed image and imagination of subjectivity" (qtd. in Gadsby140). Nelly Furman contends that "not only we are born into language which molds us, but any knowledge of the world which we experience is itself also articulated in language" (qtd. in Gadsby 140).

Selma Sonntag argues that while English is a tool of hegemony, it is at the same time a tool for resistance to hegemony. Canadian writers who use hybrid English are also resisting the hegemony of English through English. Sonntag gives the example of the Shakespearean characters Caliban and Prospero; she argues that Caliban reacts to Prospero not in the "proper" English that was taught to him but curses in his own language and thus "[I]t is through cursing that Caliban resists Prospero. Caliban does not abandon the imposed linguistic structure of Prospero, but rather creatively transforms it in the act of resistance" (7-8). Sonntag quotes Henry Widdowson to elaborate this:

> Caliban is enslaved and Prospero seeks to exercise greater control over him by teaching him English. It would appear that although Caliban may be controlled by his master's voice, he is not controlled by his master's

> language. Instead he masters it himself, makes it his own, and exploits it to express his resistance. (7)

Canadian ethnic minority writers, much like Caliban, exploit the language of the majority to advance their resistance. The use of English to fight English is not that contradictory after all; as Alistair Pennycook contends, it is possible to have "a critical paradigm that acknowledges human agency and looks not only at how people's lives are regulated by languages, culture, and discourse but also at how people resist those forms and produce their own forms" (qtd. in Sonntag 8).

The resistance is not only against non-South Asian society's culture and hegemony; these writers also resist some of the issues within South Asian society through the medium of language difference. Given that India is largely a class-driven society, and because English has become the language of the upper classes, in order to display its class-structure a writer may use Standard English when somebody from the upper class is speaking. On the other hand, for somebody from a middle class or lower class of society, an Indian dialect of English, or even Creole, may be used. This dialect may be comprehensible to a person in India but not somebody outside of the country. Indian dialects of English are most of the time easily understood, except for certain words which may or may not be comprehensible from the context. Nevertheless, "a greater deviation from the British standard may not be a deficiency for a dialect, but may, in certain cases, be a source of strength" (Talib 121).

The technique of using local words for the lower class, as well as using non-standard English to represent the people of the lower class whose level of English is not polished due to lack of education, is an extension of colonial-era English where the British sahibs used pidgins to communicate with their subjects. This is "a discourse traversed by potent racial and cultural signifiers" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 75). This technique becomes clear in the short story "The Ghost of Firozsha Baag" in which the maid Jaakaylee, who is a poor Goan Catholic working in an upscale Parsi house, complains about the loss of her language: "Forgetting my name, my language, my songs" (Baag 49). Jaakaylee is not allowed to be around when Parsi prayers are being recited. Nor is she believed by the people of the Baag when she tells them about a ghost that she encountered on the stairway. She is believed only when her mistress supposedly sees a ghost, and explains that people will then believe, implying that any discourse no matter how illogical, may carry more weight when it comes from an upper class person: "But she said, when *I* tell them, they will believe" (Baag 56, emphasis added). This episode clearly exposes how language is also tied to the class. As Ashcroft and others explain,

> Pidgin was inevitably used in the context of master-servant relationships during the period of European colonization. So the social and economic hierarchies produced by colonialism have been retained in post-colonial society through the medium of language. Of course, pidgin remains a dominant mode of discourse among all non-English-

> speakers wherever it exists, but its role in most literature, except that of the polydialectical communities of the Caribbean, is both to install class difference and to signify its presence. (Empire 75)

Indeed, in many ways, these writers are continuing in the tradition of post-colonial writing as all of the South Asian countries are former colonies. How is this continuity relevant to the Canadian literary scene? As I discussed earlier, although in a different way than India, Canada is after all a post-colonial society, and thus it makes sense to continue the tradition; also, this mode of writing takes the literary tradition a step further, since, although Canada has not been a colony in the way that other colonies have been, the culture here has been quite centralized. The ethnic writers have mostly been at the margins and they question the centre through their use of mixed language. What Ashcroft and others say of the post-colonial writing is also true of ethnic minority Canadian writing: these writers employ abrogation and appropriation,[46] thus rejecting the notions of mainstream English. By abrogating, the writers deny the mainstream culture, thus rejecting "its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words;" but this purpose will not be achieved without appropriating[47] the language (Ashcroft et al., Empire 37).

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[46] Ashcroft and others explain the terms thus: "the abrogation or denial of the privilege of 'English' involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. The second, the appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege" (37).

Rather, these strategies are quite relevant to the Canadian situation even if we consider Canada as a settler colony. Ashcroft et al. very specifically note how abrogation works in these cultures:

> In settler cultures, even more than in most post-colonial societies, abrogation will almost certainly not be total within the speaking community. Both english and English, with their attendant social, cultural, and political allegiances, will exist side by side as 'vernacular' and 'standard.' In the literature this division works on behalf of the literary test in english to signify difference, but it also indicates the very complex dynamic of appropriation in these cultures. Since the notion of a historical moment of language change is only ever a heuristic device the 'standard' code and the appropriated usage continue to exist side by side within the permanently bifurcated situation of a settler culture. The continued opposition of two discourses underlies many of the 'psychological' characteristics of such societies; their obsession with nationalism, their unresolved passion for 'identity', and the conflict of both these impulses with the residual links to European culture . . . Literatures of the settler cultures reveal some of the most subtle examples of those processes by which post-European cultures make

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[47] "Appropriation is the process by which the language is taken and made to 'bear the burden of one's own cultural experience" (Ashcroft et al, 38).

> english 'bear the burden' of an experience for which the terms of the inherited language do not seem appropriate. (Empire 74)

In fact, at times writers have written about decolonizing the role of language in their novels; for example, Vassanji in The In-between World of Vikram Lall writes of the time during the Mau-Mau revolution in Africa:

> Rakesh Uncle worked in the Post Office. Part of his job, as I learnt later, was to assist in the censoring of letters to and from the Asians; not only did many Indians write in Punjabi or Gujarati or Urdu, Rakesh Uncle explained, they used codes which the British would never understand. Daitya for the Mau Mau, Bhut-lok for the Europeans, Ravana for Jomo Kenyatta. (113)

The role of language in decolonization is apparent in the above passage. Also, by bringing in the difference in language, South Asian Canadian writers are also introducing a different culture as "the introduction of language variance in this way could be seen to propose a metaphoric entry for the culture into the 'English' text" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 50).

Culturally-marked Identity

Though critics have questioned the use of non-English words in English texts, I believe these works are a reflection on South Asian Canadian identity. Most South Asian Canadians are bilingual if not multilingual. Most of them speak one language other than English at home; their English at home is also generally embellished with words from South Asian languages such as Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, and Tamil. Thus, these texts on one hand are an expression of their multicultural and at times confused identity. Language as such is a means by which various cultural experiences are portrayed, and the characters that are situated in places such as Bombay or Nairobi cannot be expected to speak 'standard' English, not only because within this space people actually do not speak 'standard' English, but because identity and language are interconnected. Getting them to speak 'pure' English will take something away from these characters. At times language's tie to identity is revealed very subtly in writing; Vassanji's narrator in The In-between World of Vikram Lall is very aware of this tie:

> Hitherto they had been speaking in Swahili, of which Mother's version was quire rudimentary. Now, toward the end of their visit, Sakina-dadi switched Kikuyu and began a lengthy discussion with Mwangi, asking him in a gossipy manner all about his birthplace and his life, and translating choice bits for my amazed mother.
>
> Sakina speaks Kikuyu so fluently, Mother told Papa later, and then she added thoughtfully: What must it be like to be a Masai and also a Muslim Punjabi . . . Are we really Africans? (102-103)

The fact that the mother questions her African identity after listening to Sakina's fluent Kikuyu reflects that linguistic identity and national identity are tied. By learning Kikuyu, Sakina had adopted her new land as her own. Essentially, the use of non-English words gives a certain Indianness or South Asianness to the texts and characters; they signify chiefly non-Canadian environment and personae. For example, Mistry's use of language is very specifically tied to the Parsi identity. Mistry uses Gujarati in his works, but, his Gujarati is Parsi Gujarati, that is Gujarati that is influenced by a Persian accent. Parsis have been in India for centuries and have adopted Gujarati as their language since they landed in the western province of Gujarat. Mistry, by using this distinctively Persianized Gujarati, is not only writing their language into history, but also their culture, identity and their history. His books are thus an attempt at archiving the fast diminishing Parsi community.[48]

It should be noted that most of the time, the non-English words are used in the dialogues as opposed to the narration. In fact, dialogues are also more reflective of the characters' identity; narration may mirror the author's identity instead. As Desai aptly notes, in a novel

> it is dialogue that offers more problems than narration, since a dialogue in an Indian language or languages has to be presented in terms of a foreign language, without evoking, as far as possible, a foreign context. The characters should sound 'Indian' and they should also give the feeling or impression that they are talking an Indian language. (vi)

The characters that speak a mix of English with other languages define their cultural and national identities through this fusion. This hybrid language not only serves as an artistic expression of hybrid or diasporic identities but also as a reminder of the fact that language is an integral part of one's identity; changing space does not necessarily mean changing linguistic loyalties. The hybrid language that these writers and their characters use provides them with a link to their past, their memories and their nostalgia for their culture.

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[48] There are an estimated one hundred and fifty thousand Parsis in the world; the community is fast diminishing due to low birth rate and strict rules against accepting conversion.

Cultural Retention

While these writers want to inform about their language and culture, they do not always make it easy for the reader; their culturally induced discourse is at times hard to comprehend, especially when the translation is not available within the text or outside of it. This may also be a way of telling the reader that while he/she can make an attempt to understand a certain culture by deciphering the language, he/she will always remain an 'outsider' and thus can never fully be a part of that culture, just as the writer can never fully be a part of the 'mainstream' culture and thus should not be expected to become one, whether individually or in the literary sense. When analyzing a text that refuses to offer translations, a reader is left with an in-between situation, trying to understand the text while at the same time being aware that not everything can be understood; thus, "meaning is neither comprehended nor rejected, but rather recognized as something both possible and alien" (Libin 126). As Meredith Gadsby argues in her study of Caribbean women writers in Canada, "as the vehicle for transmission of culture, the tongue becomes a tool with which [this] collective consciousness and experience is conveyed via language;" language becomes "a weapon against the erasure of linguistic memory" and "the tongue is the site of confrontation, gagging on the bitterness of the battle against colonial control" (129). As a consequence, the hybrid language creates a different meaning for 'mainstream' culture and "shows the creative potential of intersecting languages when the syntactic and grammatical rules of one language are overlaid on another, and of the way in which cross-cultural literature reveals how meanings work" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 42-3).

Through the use of various words, sounds, expressions, from the mother tongue brought into the adopted tongue, the writer is able to inscribe cultural difference into the text. The above discussed strategies "enable the writer to gain a world audience and yet produce a culturally distinct, culturally appropriate idiom that announces itself as different even though it is 'English'" (Ashcroft et al., Empire 76). Thus, the literature helps to subvert the power structure, and linguistic hybridity becomes a new mode of questioning the peripheral position of the writer as well as the writing.

The question may well be asked as to why these writers feel the need to resist the mainstream culture and to retain their 'old' culture in literature; what is the need for linguistic hybridity in Canada where 'standard' English or French is generally desired? Given that Native people existed in Canada with many different cultures of their own before the French and the English came, Canada has been a multicultural and multilingual from the beginning. It is ironic to ask for the purity of language in a pluri-cultural society. In defense of South Asian Canadian writers' use of mixed language, I would like to quote Salman Rushdie, who has a good defense for the writer's use of hybrid language; he argues:

> One of the changes has to do with attitudes towards the use of English. Many have referred to the argument about the appropriateness of this language to Indian themes. And I hope all of us share the view that we can't simply use the language in the way the British did; that it needs remaking for our own purposes. Those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free. (17)

What Rushdie says of Indian writers in England and America can as well be applied to South Asian writers in Canada:

> It is the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, life in a minority group. We can quite legitimately claim as our ancestors the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews; the past to which we belong is an English past, the history of immigrant Britain. Swift, Conrad, Marx are as much our literary forebears as Tagore or Ram Mohan Roy. America, a nation of immigrants, has created great literature out of the phenomenon of cultural transplantation, out of examining the ways in which people cope with those who preceded us into this country, we can begin to do the same. (20)

The South Asian Canadian writer has created great literature and should be embraced for the same. Use of Standard English may create some sort of uniformity in Canadian literature, but is that desirable? Northrop Frye writes:

> a sense of unity is the opposite of a sense of uniformity. Uniformity, where everyone "belongs," uses the same clichés, thinks alike and behaves alike, produces a society which seems comfortable at first but is totally lacking in human dignity. Real unity tolerates dissent and rejoices in variety of outlook and tradition, recognizes that it is man's destiny to unite and not divide, understands that creating proletariats and scapegoats and second-class citizens is a mean and contemptible activity. Unity, so understood, is the extra dimension that raises the sense of belonging into genuine human life. (236)

To conclude, language serves as a medium by which South Asian Canadian writers refute the colonial history of the nations that they have left behind. At the same time, they use language to voice their disappointments against racism and discrimination, and to resist in the new nations that they have adopted. By incorporating non-English words as well as grammatical patterns in their writing, they have subverted the language of the dominant culture and thus have managed to deterritorialize the language. Raja Rao, while talking about the appropriation of English by the Indian writer, had advised that "our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it" (qtd. in Desai 6-7). South

Asian writers in Canada have certainly created this unique 'dialect' and quite successfully for that matter. By challenging the rules of Standard English, these writers create a diasporic literary space where cultural hybridization is the norm and culture and identity retention is the agenda.

CHAPTER IV

"Gu bheil togradh ann am intinn
Bhi leibh mar a bha
Ged tha fios agam us cinnt
Ribh nach till mi gu brath."

There's a longing in my heart now
To be where I was
Though I know that it's quite sure
I never shall return.
From Alistair MacLeod's No Great Mischief

Even as Canada has a rich heritage of writers writing in the two official languages, equally interesting and noteworthy is the contribution of those who write in languages other than English and French. As debates abound whether to consider these writers as 'Canadian' at all, this chapter will briefly address the debate, but the main purpose of this chapter is to trace a brief history of writings in non-official languages and analyze the writings of some of the writers of South Asian origin, especially those writing in Urdu, Gujarati, and Hindi. While delving into this analysis, I will discuss some questions such as: who are these writers writing for? Why do they write in non-official languages, especially when knowledge of English is certainly not a barrier for many of these writers? How does this writing relate to the writings in English? How is this writing connected to Canadian literature or Canada for that matter? I will also delve into the problems of production and reception of these works and suggest some ways which may enhance the positive acceptance of this body of writing. I will also look at the politics of canonization of these writers and their inclusion in exclusion from the literary history of Canada.

Literature in Heritage Languages in Canada

Despite the fact that the study of ethnic minority writers writing in English has become more common now,[49] heritage language writers, not only in the South Asian tradition, but in general, are not only under-represented, but mostly ignored in the Canadian literary world. Anthologies have hardly ever included heritage language writers, even those that have been widely translated, such as Josef Škvorecký. This point can be easily proven by picking up any of the latest Canadian literature anthologies. This is a gross disregard of heritage language writers. Jars Balan, in his introduction to Identifications, notes that "undoubtedly the most significant gap in our knowledge is Canadian literature in languages other than English or French, which has been excluded from most discussions and assessments of Canadian letters" (ix).

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[49] This is a happy acceptance in the post-multiculturalism-policy era; in fact, Mistry and Ondaatje have become an indispensable part of Canadian literature anthologies.

Although works in non-official languages have been a part of the Canadian literary scene since the 1930s, it is with the coming of official multiculturalism in the 1970s, that this phenomenon acquired more momentum.[50] As much as the policy had mixed reactions, from being hailed with immense enthusiasm to being criticized to the core, for the literary scene it had a tremendous impact; writers felt that they were now officially welcome to either write in their own languages or, even if they wrote in the official languages, to experiment with the thematics. While the production of literature was affected, it was directly related to the reception which became much more positive with the increasing number of publishing houses more willing to accept these works. As Siemerling notes, until the official multiculturalism policy, ethnic minority writing in the 'unofficial languages' had been "previously neglected or ignored by literary criticism" (268).

The struggle between the 'mainstream' language and the preservation of heritage languages is very real in any country, but more so in Canada. Critics are mostly skeptical of writers writing in heritage languages. For example, while acknowledging that an immigrant writer "has an important role to play" and that he is "the one who can convey experiences from different worlds, being himself part of different worlds," Sandahl argues that "realistically, we cannot hope to speak to the larger Canadian community in Sinhalese or Gujarati, in Japanese or Ukrainian" (136). She further goes on to argue that "Multiculturalism and multilingualism in the Canadian society do not mean that we establish a series of wells with frogs croaking in different tongues, however exotic and amusing that may be for those who have been Canadians for many generations, those who proudly announce that their grandmother was born in Ontario or in Manitoba. In order to survive we have to get out of the well and into the mainstream" (136). Without doubt, the immigrant communities should not be ghettoized in small groups. As far as the literary world is concerned, I don't think that a writer writing in any of the languages that Sandahl mentions is necessarily writing to 'amuse' the mainstream community, or for any community, for that matter. As the rest of this chapter will show, there are various reasons for writers to write in their heritage languages, and 'amusing' the mainstream or 'eroticizing' themselves is certainly not one of them. But first let me take a brief look at the history of heritage language literature in Canada.

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[50] See Young.

Unfortunately, there is no up-to-date literary history of heritage language literature in Canada; this is also a daunting task given the number of languages involved. Among the body of non-official language writers, a majority of them are poets and short story writers. Josef Škvorecký is one of the few novelists who write in non-official languages; the shortage of novelists may certainly have to do with the lack of time. Hardly any of the writers writing in heritage languages are full-time writers; they hold other jobs to make ends meet. Novels need the luxury of time; nonetheless, there are a few writers who do write novels. Besides Škvorecký, Pablo Urbanyi of Argentina, Nicolas Prychodko of Ukraine, Mykhailo Petrovsky of Russia, Arved Viirlaid of Estonia are a few that can be named. Urbanyi's translated novels include Sunset and Silver; Prychodko's translated novel Goodbye Siberia published in 1976 deals with the Russian revolution; Graves Without Crosses is Viirlaid's novel translated into English. Saad Elkadhem writes in Arabic. Within the South Asian literary group, novelists include Jay Gajjar in Gujarati, Smita Bhagwat in Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi, Suresh Kumar Goyal in Hindi, and Ikram Brelvi in Urdu.

Some of the critical works that have documented the works written in heritage languages include Mykyta I. Mandyka's History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada (1968); John Miska's Ethnic and Native Canadian Literature (1990), which is a bio-bibliographical reference work, is a proof of the throbbing multilingual activity in Canada. Some journals include Hungarian Studies Review, Urdu Canada, and Urdu International, as well as some special journal issues focusing on certain ethnic group – these include Canadian Fiction Magazine, Exile, Volvox, etc. Canadian Ethnic Studies published some issues on bibliographic details of writers in other languages. This issues recognize that "the existence of such a stratum of ethnic literature, that is those writers who write in their native languages, who often appeal to an audience both at home in Canada and abroad, and who are daily being discovered and the best of them translated" (qtd. in Bumsted 18).

Watson Kirkconnell, from 1937 to 1965, reviewed Canadian literature in languages other than French or English annually in the University of Toronto Quarterly. He also edited in 1935 Canadian Overtones, an anthology of poems translated from Icelandic, Swedish, Norwegian, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, and Ukrainian. Other than that, there are bibliographies devoted to specific ethnic group literature, such as The Hungarians in Canada: A Bibliography by Ivan Halasz de Beky. Some anthologies of translated as well as untranslated works have been published too. Canadian Fiction Magazine's two issues – one in 1976 and the other in 1980 are also noteworthy. Canadian Fiction Magazine's Number 36/37 is a special issue of fiction in translation from the unofficial languages of Canada. This issue includes fiction in Cree, Inuit, Micmac, Gaelic, Icelandic, Yiddish, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, Chinese, German, Spanish, Armenian, Estonian, and Czech. Punjabi is the only South Asian language represented in this collection; this is understandable, as in those days very little information about other South Asian language writing may have been available. In both these issues, the Punjabi works have been translated by Surjeet Kalsey. In a study of some of the stories in the magazine, J. J. Healy notes that "Isolation, solitude, compassion, the sharply observed edge of the human, the backward glance which is also the inward glance, are qualities that come through many of these stories. Canada is a muffled presence, an arena where events that have an origin and end elsewhere happen" (168). Volvox: Poetry from the Unofficial Languages of Canada in English Translation by J. Michael Yates, and John Robert Colombo's The Poets of Canada, are the poetry collections in other languages.

Many anthologies have been published in original languages. There are also anthologies of writings in Ukrainian (An Anthology of Ukrainian Poetry in Canada, edited by Yar Slavutych), Hungarian (The Sound of Time, edited by John Miska), Japanese (Kaede, edited by Takeo Nakano), and German (Unter dem Nordlicht, edited by George Epp). Within the South Asian linguistic group, Punjabi and Urdu have the strongest presence. Baz Gasht, edited by M. H. K. Qureshi, is one such anthology in Urdu.

Škvorecký, who wrote in Czech even after moving to Canada, received ample and, of course, much deserved attention in Canada as his works were translated; his The Engineer of Human Souls won the Governor-General's Award in 1984. Škvorecký came to Canada in 1968, and was an established writer who had won many literary prizes. In 1977, his first translated work The Bass Saxophone was published in Canada. Many of his works that were originally published in Czechoslovakia are now available in English translation in Canada.

Of the writers creating in heritage languages, some have been very established well-known writers in their home country; some took writing in their adopted country. As such, literature in the non-official languages, as Batts notes, follows a certain pattern in which the earliest works "reflect the problems of relocation in an environment that can be both socially and climatically hostile, though such writing often also praises the opportunities Canada offers" (769). Batts further records that while the later works deal with "tensions within the ethnic community," and the "more general themes" tend to come in much later (769). The reflection of the past cannot be avoided and most of these writers have been nostalgic to a certain extent. Just as "Hungarian literature in Canada carries with it the memory of the Soviet invasion of 1956 in various degrees, and the deep shadow of the Holocaust appears everywhere in Jewish-Canadian writing" (Blodgett, Five 14), Urdu-Canadian writing is also under the deep shackles of the history of partition of India and Pakistan. As Blodgett argues, "all of these cultures live in, and write from, the deep echoes of a past they carry with them without always being able to reach" (Five 14). As for the subject-matter, the texts range from autobiographical, to social to political to historical. Their contributions are at times social criticisms of both the host and the home culture/society. Some talk, on the one hand, about racial discrimination in Canada, loss of culture, loss of identity, alienation and isolation; on the other hand, some writers focus on much broader issues at a global level.

As for the Canadian content,[51] even for those ethnic minority writers who adopted English as their language, it has not been easy to adopt Canada as their canvas; for example, Henry Kreisel, who had decided "to embrace totally, the language, and with it the attitudes, the cast of mind, the way of thinking and feeling, of English civilization," later wrote that "with hindsight and the experience of forty years, I have come to the conclusion that I have never fully resolved all the difficulties inherent in a situation that arose when I tried to render European experience in an adopted language. And it was to take many years before I dared to tackle essentially Canadian material" (qtd. in Young 139). The question of Canadian content is also a tricky one. The ethnic writers are generally 'accused' of not having Canadian content in their writing, but as Škvorecký observes, "for an ethnic writer who comes to this country later in life, this Canadian content business is a difficult thing to handle" (87). Rohinton Mistry almost seems to answer this through the narrator of his short story "Swimming Lessons":

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[51] I touch upon the issue of Canadian content here as many a times writers' works have been deemed as non-Canadian based on their subject-matter. I do not, though, believe that the content of the work should decide the importance of a writer or his work.

> *...Mother said that she would also enjoy some stories about Toronto and the people there; it puzzles me, she said, why he writers nothing about it, especially since you say that writers use their own experience to make stories out of'* which he answers in the next passage thus: *"Then Father said it is true, but he is probably not using his Toronto experience because it is too early; what do you mean, too early, asked Mother and Father explained it takes a writer about ten years time after an experience before he is able to use it in his writing; it takes that long to be absorbed*

> *internally and understood, thought out and thought about over and over again, he haunts it and it haunts him if it is valuable enough, till the writer is comfortable with it to be able to use it as he wants; but this is only one theory I read somewhere, it may or may not be true."* (Baag 256)

Actually, writers writing in non-official languages have more Canadian content than ethnic minority writers writing in English. Thus Young asks the question:

> Are writers such as Kreisel, Kattan, Dabydeen, Suknaski and Phelps, Canadian writers because they write in French and English, even when their writing is imbued with a sensibility nurtured in an ethnic milieu and their chief source of inspiration may be not here but somewhere else? By contrast, are writers such as Josef Škvorecký, Robert Zend, George Faludy or Waclaw not Canadian writers because they write in other languages even when their inspiration is the large Canadian cultural milieu, as in many of Zend's poems, Iwaniuk's latest collection, *Evenings on Lake Ontario*, Škvorecký's new novel about to be published in English translation or in Faludy's constant questioning of North American materialism? (13).

At times, these works make an attempt to be Canadian, to be the ambassadors of Canada to the 'back home'. However, as Vassanji puts it, "Conscious attempts to create "Canadian" works are often contrived and are successfully Canadian only to the modernist extent that the characters inhabit a no-man's land – a situation that reflects ultimately the author's own dubious position" (4).

Another question that is often raised pertains to the writers' choice of language; the question of why these writers choose to write in heritage languages has many answers. Henry Kreisel argues that it is not quite possible for a writer to discard the mother tongue. Kreisel asks: "Could one really change one's language as if it were a shirt? And could one simply throw the discarded shirt away?" and answers that one chooses to write in a certain language because "identity is linked to language," and "the emotional and psychological centres of the personality [are interlinked] with the language in which that personality expresses itself" (3). Kreisel argues that, especially for first generation writers, the question of language "is a very complex one" and it is "a decision taken on the deepest subconscious or even unconscious level, almost compulsively, a response to a deeply felt need, though neat rational explanation may later be furnished, either by the writer himself or by others" (9). Discussing Kreisel's choice to write in English, Blodgett elaborates:

> Although not every writer needs to make such a decision, even the decision to retain one's own language in a linguistic situation where it is not officially recognized distinguishes the minority writer in Canada from those who grow up in families of largely anglophone or francophone ancestry […] To change a language results in cultural slippage: something is lost as something else is

> gained. Ambiguity, with all its positive and negative connotations, is always in some way present. (Five 209)

As such, the next question that is often asked of these writers who chose to write in their heritage languages is why do they not write in English? Unlike the ethnic minority writers writing in appropriated English, the choice of language for those writing in heritage languages is not a political one. These writers write in these languages first, because it is their mother tongue; second, because they are comfortable creating in these languages; and third, some of them, though they know English, do not feel competent enough to produce in English. For example, Josef Škvorecký writes essays and articles in English but has never written any fiction in English. He explains it thus:

> Well, fiction involves playing with language in a way that non-fiction doesn't. I use slang, various idioms, make jokes, and play with dialects. I find that difficult enough to do in the language I have spoken all my life, the one I feel at home in. I don't think I could do it in English – there I'm just a visitor who arrived late. It would certainly change my style, but I'm not sure that I could really write in it. (qtd. in Hutcheon 31-32)

The question of the quality of the writing is also brought forth; still, this should not be the prime concern in assessing the literature in heritage languages, at least not yet. It is imperative to acknowledge the existence of these writings before getting into an analytical and critical exercise. Not all literatures can be classified as 'good'; nonetheless, their importance as documents of social commentary cannot be undermined. These writings add to the plurality of Canadian literature which is as such marked by cultural, regional, and ethnic diversity. In fact, as Siemerling emphasizes, "Canadian literature builds on a variety of regional and linguistic contexts and traditions whose continued diversity is often de-emphasized in processes of national cultural emergence" (265). John Robert Colombo, in his introduction to the anthology of poetry in non-official languages, remarked that "The so-called ethnic writers have played a much more important role in the literary history of this country than has generally been recognized" (qtd. in Young 141). As such these writers are "doubly disadvantaged" as they are ignored in both their 'home' as well as 'host' countries, given that both tend to believe that they have the 'privilege' of belonging to the other side of the border (Batts 764).

It is interesting to note that not only is writing in English affected or 'enriched' by the use of heritage languages, but the effect has also worked vice versa. Writers writing in heritage languages have also been influenced by English. Josef Škvorecký, in an interview, makes the following observation about his Czech writing from Canada:

> There are always new terms, slang words, idioms and so on. But the core of the language seems to me to have remained the same, and when I write I write in it and from it. But, you know, when I speak Czech, I have noticed that I use American or Canadian

> Czech. I think of it as a dialect of the mother tongue. And it is over a century old . . . this situation, in which the immigrant's first language is influenced by English, is common to all immigrants and you can find it in every ethnic community. Henry Mencken writes about this in his appendix to *The American Language* where he shows how European languages become corrupted by American English. My own attitude to this is fairly liberal. I see it as an interesting linguistic phenomenon with great humorous potential which, as you know, I try to make use of in my fiction, although it is very difficult to translate into English. It needs a reader who knows both languages and can see and hear the humour that comes out of the meeting of the two. (qtd. in Hutcheon, Solitudes 31)

The problems that writers in heritage languages face in Canada are many; not the least of which is getting published. Škvorecký identifies the struggle of the writer as well as publisher in his essay titled "Some Problems of the Ethnic Writer in Canada":

> No, an ethnic novelist who had matured as a writer before he landed on these shores, stands very little chance. In the first place, unless he had already enjoyed *international* – as opposed to mere *local* – acclaim, such as Milan Kundera, nobody will touch his work. And one cannot blame the struggling Canadian publisher. He or his editor – if he can afford one – cannot read the manuscript

> and has to rely on readers' reports written by people fluent in the author's language. These assessors, much more often than not, are the author's compatriots, and quite often people who, while being able to read the language, think that certain books cannot be perused while eating frankfurters. The Canadian publisher naturally suspects them of being biased in favour of the work, in the former case, or of lacking the acumen necessary to recognize literary value, in the latter one. (84)

The Canadian publisher as well as the writer has very little support when it comes to publishing in heritage languages; this adds to the plight of the writer.

The question of preservation of languages and their literature is also relevant. Kirkconnell, in his article titled "New-Canadian Poetry," wrote that "while almost 2.5 million Canadians with first languages other than English or French have produced several 'miniature' literatures, these are bound to disappear as immigrants become assimilated in one of the two major linguistic groups" (qtd. in Siemerling 266). Nonetheless, literary productions in heritage languages have continued, but the pool of languages has changed. Whatever interest was there in non-official language writing seems to have diminished with time, at least in the case of European languages. Škvorecký notes that an ethnic writer is able to retain elements of "culture and traditions, perhaps even customs, to some degree," but "the language is *largely* lost in the second generation, and *entirely* lost in the third" (86). He adds that whatever exceptions there are, are rare. Škvorecký thus felt that there will never be a parallel (to English or French) literary tradition in Canada (86).

A writer in heritage languages not only faces the problem of a limited audience, but also the fact that his "Canadianness" is questioned. The question of where these writers belong has always been debated. Answering Edward Mozejko's question of whether the minority writers belong to their nationalities or Canada, Blodgett argues that "they are, in fact, both, but being both, they can be exclusively neither one nor the other" (Five 211). As Bumsted notes in his introduction to Canadian Literature's issue devoted to "Language, Culture and Literary Identity in Canada":

> One common means of exclusion is to assume that the choice of non-Canadian language brands the writer as one still essentially committed to the nation of origin, overlooking the possibility that people immigrated to Canada to preserve their culture, not to escape it. (18)

While it may be argued that these writers are not a part of Canadian literature as they do not write in official languages, as I argued earlier, socially, with multiculturalism comes multilingualism and these writers are certainly making an important contribution to the Canadian literary scene, albeit in a different language. The irony for these writers is that at times they belong to "no man's land" as they belong nowhere; their countries of origin consider them as foreign writers and the Canadian critics consider them as "outside" the Canadian literary scene due to their language choice.

As Stella Sandahl notes, literature written in heritage languages, "reflects the reality and perhaps also the locality of the place where it is written, be it Kenya, Canada, or Guyana" (135). She then asks some questions:

> So the question arises whether a novel written in, for example, Tamil about the experiences of a South Indian or Sri Lankan immigrant in Canada has any relevance for a Tamil-speaking reader in Tamil Nadu or Sri Lanka? Then a second question arises: for whom does a writer write? For himself or for an audience? If writing is a piece of private psychotherapy, the choice of language matters only to the author. If he aims at a larger public, then he has to recognize his audience. A story or a novel or a poem written and published in Canada in a language spoken by a miniscule minority aims implicitly at a readership within that limited community. It has its own value as a voice expressing the hopes and fears and the successes and frustrations of a community in the midst of the painful experience of being in between cultures and identities (135).

The analysis that follows is an attempt to answer some of these questions. Sandahl feared in the 1980s that the literature in South Asian languages would "not last even one generation" because the newer generation will go through the English or French-speaking school system, and thus it will lose the language of their parents (135). She regrets that even when the younger generation has some knowledge of their parents' language, it is very superficial, and is limited to the language of

"Hindi masala movies from the ever-producing Bombay film industry" and that "these films are not renowned for intellectual sophistication" (135). However, what Sandahl hasn't considered is the constant influx of new immigrants. From the 1980s when her article was written, to the time that this chapter is being written, the number of immigrants coming from South Asia has increased steadily, and the production of literature has, in fact, reached new heights instead of dying or diminishing. Her fears that "the immigrant children are surrounded by a dominant culture and language" and that the language cannot exist "outside of its natural setting and cultural context," although partially true, have again been proven wrong because of the many public schools that include bilingual programs. Students in these bilingual programs may not acquire a language proficiency sufficient to write in those languages, but these programs will certainly help those languages survive (135). As W. H. New's editorial titled "Papayas and Red River Cereal" in Canadian Literature (issue 132) rightly points out, "European vicissitudes are not the only influences that have been shaping Canada, and that the two official languages are not the only arbiters of variety open to national cultural understanding" (3). In the context of the above history and debates, I will now analyze South Asian Canadian writing in various languages.

Gujarati Literature in Canada

The Gujarati language hails from the western province of Gujarat in India. Belonging to the Indo-Aryan group, it is one of the oldest languages of India. It has over 46 million speakers worldwide. Other than in Gujarat, speakers of Gujarati also reside heavily in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta among other parts in the country; there are many people with a Gujarati-speaking background living in the U. K., the U. S., Canada, and Africa.[52] Many Gujaratis migrated to Africa and the Middle East in the 1940s; many of those in Africa subsequently moved to England, the U.S. and Canada after political turmoil in East Africa. Today, in the Toronto region itself there are over hundred thousand Gujarati-speaking people. Cutchhi, which is a dialect of Gujarati but uses the Gujarati script, is also spoken by a large number of Gujaratis, especially those hailing from the Cutch region of Gujarat.

Gujaratis are one of the leading groups among the Indian diaspora; although mostly a business community, their love for literature is noteworthy. In fact, Gujarati literature has a very rich history and dates back to the sixth century. While the old literature was mostly poetry, prose genres such as novel, drama, non-fiction followed later. As of the fifteenth century, Gujarati literature has been influenced by Persian-Urdu and Sanskrit traditions of poetry (Dalby 237). Poetry was the strongest genre, especially in the medieval period when poetry was used to express religious values and emotions. Gujarati literature has a rich history, with writers such as Narsinh Mehta, Ratno, and Vallabh still read and cherished. Narmad, Dalpat, Kalapi, and Nanalal are some of the leading writers of the nineteenth century. The Gandhian era saw the movement towards more socialist writing and the struggle for independence color literary writing. In the post-independence period, both Gujarati prose and poetry have flourished, and with the influence of western literature, there clearly were two branches of writing: one that followed the traditional, and the other that advanced in the footsteps of the newer trends of symbolism, existentialism, and the absurd. The most well-known Gujarati work is of course Satya na Prayogo, the autobiography of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, widely known as Mahatma Gandhi. This autobiography, which was also translated in English as My Experiments with Truth is one of the most read Gujarati works. In the 1970s and afterward, many Gujarati writers moved to the West, especially to the U.K. and the U.S. These writers kept writing in their adopted countries while publishing mostly in India. The presence of these writers added to the continuous thriving of Gujarati literature wherever they were. This kind of prosperity of literature is absent in the Canadian Gujarati community.

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[52] "One of the oldest communities of the diaspora is in East Africa, where Indian traders (Gujarati, Cutchi, and Konkani)were already established in the 1490s when Portuguese explorers reached the Indian Ocean. This linguistic enclave was reinforced when Gujaratis were recruited in large numbers by both British and German governments to work in East Africa around 1990. East African Gujarati became a distinct dialect. Many East African Gujaratis, faced with an increasingly uncertain future and mounting discrimination in newly independent East African countries – especially Uganda – migrated to Britain, where there are now a third of a million speakers of the language, many of them in London areas of Wembley, Harrow, and Newham and in Leicester, Coventry and Bradford" (Dalby 237).

Gujaratis in Canada have migrated either directly from India or from other places, mostly Africa and Fiji. Many of these second diaspora people have not even visited Gujarat; but they continue to speak Gujarati, the language of their parents and grandparents. While it is very exciting to see these second generation diasporans speak Gujarati, their Gujarati is certainly mixed with other languages, especially Swahili for those who have moved from East Africa. For those who have come directly from India, there is, of course, a good command of the language and at times they are well versed in Gujarati literature too. It is mostly these first-generation migrants who are involved in literary activity in Canada. But as Thakar Enros rightly notes, literary activity is only a hobby for these writers as none of them are full-time writers (169). Unlike in the United States and the United Kingdom, in Canada there has been no 'serious' literary activity as far as Gujarati is concerned. Then again, very recently things have started changing. Both the U.S. and the U. K. have some established Gujarati writers such as Madhu Rai, Vipul Kalyani, Panna Naik, Adil Mansuri, etc. Although Canada can boast of many Gujarati writers, none of the established writers have moved to Canada, and whatever literature has been produced here is, sadly enough, not of very high literary value. Reasons for this are varied. Gujaratis in the U.K. are closer to the home country and thus able to keep in touch with literary activity back home and be inspired by it; many writers visit and lecture around the U.K. regularly. The U.S. has had a very strong Gujarati presence for years before Canada started developing this community; this may have added to the richness of some writing there, added to the fact that some established Gujarati writers moved to the US and continued their literary activity. Nonetheless, as I mentioned earlier, the value of these works as social documents cannot be underestimated.

As for the earliest records of Gujarati writing in Canada, Virendra Adhiya used to write his "Letter from Canada" in Kumar, a leading Gujarati literary journal in the 1950's. These 'letters' used to carry information about Canada, and told the Gujarati Indian community about a country of which they didn't know much in the 1950s. Currently, in Canada, poetry, the short story and novel are the chosen genres of Gujarati writers; while there is tremendous activity in poetry, there is very little activity in drama. The majority of writers reside in the greater Toronto area. Some Canadian writers of Gujarati background include Jay Gajjar, Keshav Chanderia, Neeta Dave (Desai), Shailesh Desai, Lila Mehta, Prakash Mody, Abid Okadia, Rashida Damani, Asim Randeri, Smita Bhagwat, Kishor Patel, Firoz Khan, Virendra Adhiya, and MohammadAli 'Wafa'. These writers have contributed to the preservation of Gujarati literature, art, and culture in Canada. It is interesting to note that most of these Gujarati writers have migrated directly from India; those who are in a second diaspora, which includes those writers who have come to Canada via the Caribbean or East Africa, have chosen to write in English instead. So writers such as M. G. Vassanji, whose background is Gujarati, do not write in Gujarati. This may be because they have not lived in the direct environment of the language. These writers do not feel that their knowledge of the language is sufficient. A look at the background and work of some of some representative writers is helpful in understanding the tradition.

Jay Gajjar

One of the most active writers in Gujarati in Canada is Jay Gajjar. Born in Gujarat in 1934, Gajjar moved to Canada in 1970, and, among other awards, has received the Order of Canada. He is a writer of about three hundred short stories published in several well known dailies, literary journals, and magazines in India such as Kumar, Navchetan, Chitralekha, Shabdashrusti, Gurjari, Sandesh, Darpan[53] etc. Some of his short stories and articles have been broadcast on All India Radio in India; he has also participated in talks on CBC Television in Canada. Since 2004, he has been contributing to the Word on the Street Festival organized at various locations in Canada. He has also written seven novels which include Fulde Fulde Foram[54] (Fragrant Flowers 1967), Antastal (Voice of the Heart) Sneh Sunaya Saravala (Love, Nil, Addition 1969), Paththar Thar Thar Dhruje (The Shuddering Stone 2000), Timir na Tej (The Light of Darkness 2005), Kachi mati nu Ghar (House of Raw Dust 2003), and Aandhi no Ujaas (The Light of Storm 2006) He has also published two short story collections - Prem Diwani (Crazy in Love 2006) and Tulsi no Chod (The Tulsi Plant 2001). In addition, he writes a series of articles titled "Aa Che Canada" (This is Canada) which are published in a literary journal named Navchetan in Gujarat. These articles are meant to inform Gujarati readers in India about Canada and range in subjects such as Canadian culture, literature, history, geography, and even Toronto's waste management system. His novel Paththar Thar Thar Dhruje has been translated into English as The Shuddering Stone and is described on his website as "a romantic/mystery novel reflecting Eastern and Western culture" (jaygajjar.com). The original Gujarati novel, which was first published in the Sunday supplement of the well-known Gujarati daily Gujarat Samachar, was also filmed as a TV drama in 52 episodes by the same name; it aired on a Gujarati channel in India.

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[53] While I translate the titles of the author's works, I do not translate the titles of newspapers, magazines and journals, as those titles do not mirror author's works.

[54] I am not providing a transliteration guide as I have followed the transliteration provided either by the authors, or the reviews of their works in English, or information on their websites which is mostly in English. Thus, the transliterations here are diverse and do not follow any single system.

Gajjar's subject matter is equally divided between India and Canada; for example, in his short story collection titled Prem Diwani half the stories are placed in Canada. Still, the approach is quite Indian; thus, Gajjar tries to impose Indian value-systems on his characters. There is also a judgmental attitude, especially when it comes to women in his stories. This particular collection revolves around the theme of love in its various forms: love as devotion, love as faith, love as ecstasy, love as warmth, and love as sacrifice. There is also an attempt to break down stereotypes of Western people and culture. For example, the title story "Prem Diwani" (Crazy in Love) sings the praises of an American woman's devotion to her lover, thus trying to break down the negative stereotypes of American culture. "Pakhandi, Taru Naam Purush" ("Cheater, thy name is man") is again a woman-centred story that draws in a Western woman's devotion to her nation as she hands over her husband to the police for scheming against the nation. This is juxtaposed against a story set in India, wherein an Indian woman takes her husband back even after he has cheated on her and left for America with his new girlfriend. By writing these kinds of stories, Gajjar is clearly trying to show the inherent cultural difference in Indian and Western societies. Although Gajjar's stories are very melodramatic, they clearly are meant to educate Indian audiences about Western cultural values. Thus Raju, a character in his story titled "Forum," argues with his mother about going to the West for better opportunities. His mother is concerned that he will become too westernized and forget his Indian values. Raju's answer is:

> Not everybody who goes to America becomes rotten. There are good people there too. Are all the people here good people? Don't people here steal? Isn't there robbery here? Don't murders happen here? Don't children here too abandon their parents after marriage? Everything ours good, and everything theirs bad – people have become habituated to judging others…. America is unnecessarily vilified.[55] (109)

The idea here is to emphasize that human issues are universal, and to judge other cultures is nobody's business. If translated, these stories may well serve Western audiences as well, but for now, they illuminate Indian or the Gujarati -reading North American audiences on Western values. Gajjar's women characters are very stereotypical; intelligent, well-educated, rich, or women with independent minds are usually the ones that either can't find a spouse, or if they are married, their marriages are in shambles because of their ambitions. The idea that a woman cannot handle career and marriage, and that sacrifice is a woman's virtue is inherent in many stories. While refuting modern feminist trends, Gajjar's stories look, nonetheless, for changes to old traditions within Indian society. "Tulsi no Chod" is a story of a father who sacrificed the pleasures of life and companionship in order to raise a daughter; the daughter at the time of her wedding makes sure her father marries a woman who is a widow herself. A bit melodramatic, the story is bold for Indian audiences as, although not totally looked down upon, widows remarrying is not easily accepted in India.

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[55] Translations mine unless specified otherwise.

Gajjar uses English words within his Gujarati writing to reflect his Westernized characters; these words give the flavour of his characters in Canada and the U.S. to his Indian audiences. Apparently, the South Asian community in Canada and the U.S. speaks quite a hybrid language and, by using it, Gajjar tries to reflect the realities of everyday life. His novel Pathar Thar Thar Dhruje (The Shuddering Stone) is a clear example of linguistic hybridity. Here are a few passages to identify the point. The words in italics are originally in English in this Gujarati novel:

> The first ten *seats* were of *business class* in Air India *Flight no. 181. Seat Five C* was Vicky Desai's *seat*. He put his *overcoat* on the *seat* and looked around. Other people had not yet come in the *business class*. It was quiet in the *cabin*. (1)

Or as it goes in the following paragraph:

> Meena stood up for *safety demonstration* as the *announcement* was made for the *plane* to take off. This was *routine* for Meena . . . Vicky

> took the "*Success*" *magazine* out of his *briefcase*. *Magazine* had published pictures and *life styles* of ten *self-made multimillionaires*. (5)

As the names in the above passages demonstrate, Gajjar's characters that are set in the West also adopt different names to go with the mainstream culture.

Gajjar's works are an attempt to blend Eastern and Western cultures. His characters are mostly of Indian origin; they have been raised in the West, but are, nonetheless, followers of their religion and culture. His novel Aandhi no Ujas is placed in Canada; Tulsi no Chod, which is a collection of eighteen short stories, is placed in Gujarat and North America. The book has been hailed as an excellent amalgamation of Eastern and Western language, lifestyle, and characterization. Of his second short story collection, Prem Diwani, half of the stories are placed in India, and the other half are placed in the West; he portrays characters living in various locations such as Pansar (India), New York and Toronto. Although his works can be classified mostly as popular chick lit, Gajjar occupies a place of honor among the diasporic Gujarati writers. His works are not literary masterpieces, but he has been defended as somebody trying to reach common man.[56]

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[56] Dr. Keshubhai Desai, well-known Gujarati critic residing in Gujarat, in his introduction to Gajjar's short story collection compares Gajjar to Madhu Rai, one of the very well-known Gujarati writers now in the U.S. and says that while Gajjar may not have the caliber of Rai who gives prominence to technique and style, Gajjar has a different audience – one that understands his simplistic and realistic stories aimed at common readership.

Mohammad Ali 'Wafa'

Mohammad Ali 'Wafa' is a poet who mostly writes ghazals in Gujarati; although the ghazal was originally a Persian form that was later adapted into Urdu, Gujarati literature has been influenced heavily by Urdu and Persian literature and the ghazal has been embraced very successfully. Wafa is a poet of good caliber, and besides publishing his works in different journals, also posts his creations on <http://bazmewafa.wordpress.com>. Wafa's poetry is inspired by love for India Issues such as the communal riots of 2002 in Gujarat have certainly been influential. His website/blog, which is the first of its kind in Canada, also serves as a good source of other works of Gujarati creations as he posts poetry, essays, and announcements from around the globe on his website. This blog, which was started in 2005, has added a new chapter to the development of Gujarati literature in Canada. The blog mostly publishes 'quality' work and has become a link for the Gujarati writers and readers from across the globe. Ali updates the blog regularly to reflect the newest creations.

Smita Bhagwat

Smita Bhagwat is a wonderful addition to the Gujarati Canadian spectrum. Bhagwat has lived in Canada for over a decade and has published twenty six books in Gujarati and sixteen books in Marathi. While a major part of her work was done in India, she has continued to write after immigrating to Canada. Her books include Jindagi Name Navalkatha (A Novel named Life), and a travelogue named Vent Chetu Aakash (Sky not too far) Other than novels and travelogues, Bhagwat also writes short stories and biographies. Her recent work is a short story collection titled O Canada.

Shailesh Desai is a poet who again publishes in Gujarati journals in the U.S. and the U.K. In his poem titled "Holocaust" he laments the loss of democracy in the world, and the resultant loss of innocent lives.

"Shabdasetu" – Canada's Gujarati Literary Group, based in Toronto, is active in promoting and preserving the Gujarati language and literature. It invites eminent Gujarati writers, poets and scholars from India, promotes local writers, and arranges talks on the literary subjects. The group meets the second Sunday of every month, and as part of the group's activity, talks on mainstream Canadian writing are held in order to inform the Gujarati writers of the ongoing trends in Canadian literature. The group has also published a bibliography of North American Gujarati writers titled Gujarati Writers of North America: Who's Who of 32 North American Writers, compiled and edited by Prakash Mody. Although a majority of writers in the anthology are from the United States, it should be acknowledged that at the time of publication of the anthology there were very few Gujarati writers in Canada. Mody is also a non-fiction freelance writer who has written a great deal on Jainism in journals such as Jain Society, Toronto. He has also written on Gujarati literary activities in Canada. A former employee of Ontario Television, Mody is a leading force in the management of "Shabdasetu" and its events. His article on the Gujarati community in the Greater Toronto area is forthcoming in a book on various ethnic communities in Toronto. "Swar-akshar" is a group similar to "Shabdasetu" and is based in Mississauga.

Literary Journals and Community Newspapers in Gujarati

On the Gujarati literary journal front, Canada is still lagging behind the U.S. and the U.K. The U.S. has a long established Gujarati literary journal titled Gurjari Digest, and a new one, Sandhi, has just been launched. The U.K. has Opinion, being edited by Vipul Kalyani for over eleven years; Australia has Matrubhasha. All these journals are high quality journals publishing works by the expatriate writers (mostly of the country from which the journal hails) as well as writers from India. However, so far Canada does not have any Gujarati journal. The only consolation for the Gujaratis is community newspapers; four community newspapers in Gujarati are published in Toronto: the Gujarat Times (simultaneously published in New York), Gujarat Abroad, Gujarat Express, and Swadesh. Other than covering Indian as well as international news, these weekly or biweekly newspapers also have articles on Gujarati literature and culture, on top of articles on religions mostly on Hinduism and Jainism. Most of these newspapers publish poetry and short stories, but given that their mandate is mostly advertisements, very little attention is given to the quality of literature that is published. As such, most of the time these newspapers are littered with commercials and it is difficult to find a short story or a poem tucked somewhere among those advertisements. The Gujarat Times, though, is better qualitatively than other papers and makes some serious attempt to promote quality literature.

Conversely, many journals and newspapers from India are available at many Indian grocery stores; for writers these still hold more weight than the local newspapers. It is easy to find Gujarati journals or newsmagazines such as Chitralekha, Sakhi, or Akandanand in Toronto. Moreover, many newspapers and international literary journals are now available online. In 1988, analyzing some early Gujarati literature in Canada, Pragna Thakkar Enros in her essay titled "Gujarati Literature in Canada," wrote:

> The interesting point about these (three) stories is that the customs and the way of life described in them are relatively unknown to Canadian society. Indian society is changing, and these customs are now losing their foothold in parts of India, particularly in the cities. However, the authors of these stories write of these Indian traditions and customs as a universally existing way of life, and accept them without challenge. These stories may thus give an erroneous view of contemporary India. It is also interesting that, although the writers have been exposed to different problems of life in Canada, the stories still reflect the problems of a traditional Indian society. The problems and themes of the society the authors are living in have yet to appear in their work. Is it possible that the problems of present Canadian society have not yet become their own or touched them enough to appear in their literature? (172-73)

With passage of time, themes have changed. Now Gujarati writers not only write about India but also about 'Canadian' issues; most of the time it is the conflict between two generations and the clash of the values of the East and the West.

Moreover, there is an exchange between India and Canada in the form of Gujarati translations; for example, the poetry collection titled Kavisaptak (Seven Poets) is a collection of Gujarati translations of seven Canadian poets, namely, Eli Mandel, Earle Birney, Anne Hébert, Phyllis Webb, Dorothy Livesay, Leonard Cohen, and Margaret Atwood. The poems have been translated by Shirin Kudchedkar and were published in 1989. Another publication of Canadian poetry translated into Gujarati has been published by Gujarat Sahitya Academy; these translations were done by Nita Ramaiyya, a professor with SNDT University, Mumbai.

Hindi Literature in Canada

Hindi is the national language of India, but it is not spoken in southern India. Mahal notes that over and above being spoken by about four hundred and eighty million people in India, Hindi is also spoken by three hundred and twenty million people outside of India (viii). Although Hindi is close to Urdu, it is more influenced by Sanskrit than to Urdu, which is heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian. Both languages also follow different scripts. In Canada, Hindi literature is the least developed field within the South Asian language group. A news journal named Saraswati Patra was recently launched in Edmonton. Edited by Dushyant Saraswat, Patra publishes poems and short stories in Hindi besides news items and advertisements. Saptahik Hindi: The Weekly Hindi News as well as The Hindustan Times are launched from Toronto; both are community newspapers with very little space devoted to literary creations. Hindi literary groups such as Hindi Sahitya Sabha in Edmonton and Toronto are now becoming more active. The Alberta Hindi Parishad (Association) has been active in Edmonton for over a decade and occasionally organizes *kavisammelans.*[57] The Parishad also offers Hindi language classes which are held at the University of Alberta. Recently at a gathering held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Hindi Sahitya Sabha in Toronto, many poets such as Dr. Bhartendu Srivastava, Sandeep Tyagi, Suman Ghai, Shailaja Saksena and others recited their poetry. Edmonton's Rajiv Ranjan recently published a poetry collection titled Suno re Bandhu Vatan ki Baat: Kavya Sankalan (Listen Friends to the Discourse of Homeland: A Poetry Collection, 2007). There has been no systematic attempt to study Hindi literature in Canada. By far, the most active Hindi writer in Canada is Suresh Kumar Goyal.

Suresh Kumar Goyal

Suresh Kumar Goyal is a professor at Concordia University in Montreal and has been in Canada for over thirty years; proficiency in English is certainly not an issue for him. While he teaches Operations Management in English and has written over 200 academic papers, his creative writing is in Hindi. Goyal has so far written over 200 short stories in Hindi in magazines in India such as Sarita,

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[57] Gathering of poets

Mukta, Grihsobha, and Kadambiri. Also a collection of 49 short stories Keechar ka Kamal (Lotus in Filth) was published in 1985. He is also the writer of a novel titled Apne Apne Need (One's Own Nest) published in 1992. He also writes muktaks[58] and essays. Now he writes two stories a month and has a total readership of over 10 million. He says that emotionally he is more connected to Hindi and, since creative writing is an emotional endeavor, his writing flows in Hindi:

> When it comes to expressing my feelings and my reactions to the events around me, words come to me automatically in Hindi. On the level of emotions and sensitivity, I naturally respond in Hindi. Writing for me is escape from the pressures of work, maybe a way of dealing with (racial) discrimination that all immigrants feel. Above all, it's a way to keep my sanity. (Anand, Sahara Times J 3)

Goyal was not a writer in India, where he was born in the state of Uttar Pradesh. When he moved to Canada he used to write letters to relatives in Hindi. He wrote his first short story titled "Dipti" in 1987; the story was published in Mukta. But his wife challenged him, saying it was just a fluke that his story got published; thus, he wrote his second story, "Guarantee," which was also published. These stories are based in India; however, since they were published in India, the editor of the magazine suggested that his audience was more interested in stories about

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[58] Verse in four lines

NRIs – non-resident Indians, and that he write stories with a Canadian component. Anand analyses his work thus:

> Readers of his stories seem to have developed an affinity with Goyal's people who shiver in Canada's cold and plod through its snow, shop (and are caught shoplifting) in the stores. And often study or work at McGill or Concordia universities in Montreal where Goyal also lives. A typical Goyal story is full of coincidence, chance meetings and dramatic encounters that segue into a moral at the end. Characters in Goyal's stories are drawn from his own experiences and even more heavily from those lived by his friends, colleagues, and the expatriate Indians he met in England and in Canada. (Anand, Sahara Times J 3)

Goyal's novel Apne Apne Need traces the life of Ravi, who grows up in India and migrates to Canada to study in Montreal. Halfway through, the novel follows Ravi's doctoral student life in Canada, while commenting on Canadian weather, education system, cultural, and social structures. Ravi falls in love with a Caucasian girl named Vicky and marries her after she gets pregnant. After marriage, Vicky gets in a bad car accident and loses the fetus; the damage is so severe that doctors confirm that she will never conceive again. In the meantime, Ravi's mother has come to Canada to take care of Vicky. Although very melodramatic in nature, the novel would serve an Indian audience well in terms of information about Canada. For example, the following words spoken by Vicky exemplify Canada's work culture:

> This is Canada, Ravi. Here people come up very fast. But it doesn't take long to go down if you don't pay attention to work. Don't ever take your work easy. Everything in life is important, but work is most important. I have known this, although the hard way. (91)

Or the following where clearly the author's focus is Canadian weather and education system:

> Ravi didn't realize how fast the time fled between September and December. In the last week of November, a snow storm hit Montreal; almost forty five centimeters of snow poured down. That day he had to take a bus to get to his department. Exams were pretty close. In Canada students don't have much time after the course to prepare for the exams. If the last class of the course was on a Friday, the exam could well be on the following Monday. Ravi felt a bit odd that he had to write the exams without any preparation break, but he had prepared ahead of time so, why worry?

The above passages clearly demonstrate that Goyal certainly has his Indian audience in mind when writing. By elaborating on the exams to an Indian audience for whom there is a considerable time between the course and the exam, Goyal is not only informing Indian readers of the education system in Canada, but is also telling them of the fast pace of life in Canada.

Urdu Writing in Canada

Urdu is the language spoken by people in Pakistan as well as in India, mostly the northern provinces of Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, as well in certain southern cities, mainly Hyderabad. It is also spoken by scattered groups of people around the country, especially those in cities such as Junagadh which were closely tied to the Mughal Empire. Belonging to the Indo-Aryan group and heavily influenced by Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit traditions, Urdu is closely related to Hindi. Initially a court language during the time of Mughal rule (having replaced Persian), it became the lingua franca of the country for a long time. With the partition of the nation into India and Pakistan, Urdu was adopted as the national language of Pakistan. There are approximately fifty million speakers of Urdu worldwide. Urdu has gone through a lot of political turmoil in India as well as Pakistan, being labeled a 'Hindu language' in the former and fighting for co-existence with Sindhi and Punjabi in the latter.

Urdu literature, though only a few centuries old, is very rich; strong in the poetic tradition, it has given the literary world some of the strongest poets such as Mirza Ghalib, Mohammad Iqbal, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz among others. Urdu poetry has been translated in various languages and has been anthologized both in the East as well as the West. Urdu *mushairas*[59] are a big part of cultural traditions and have always attracted people with both literary as well as non-literary backgrounds. These gatherings are very emotionally charged, with crowds appreciating each and every line and word of the poetry. In fact, these gatherings have become a part of the social structure and are a culturally bonding experience for people in diaspora. As such Urdu poets are looked upto with tremendous respect and reverence in the Urdu cultural world. Urdu poetry and especially mushairas are a big part of Urdu culture. When people with an Urdu background in Canada miss their 'home' and culture, they organize mushairas; in fact, this recitation of poetry is encouraged, appreciated, and financed. Even those who do not understand literature are attracted by the 'cultural magic' of Urdu poetry and thus support the organizing of literary events. Also, the oral tradition is very dominant in Urdu, and hence, other literary forms are not as popular as poetry. These poetry gatherings also attract Hindi poets as both languages are mutually understood, and theatre, cinema, and music of the subcontinent have always shared Hindi and Urdu. Consequently, Urdu literature has flourished the most in Canada when it comes to literature in South Asian languages.

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[59] Gathering of poets

Given that Urdu writing in Canada is one of the most developed among the South Asian writing in heritage languages, doing justice to all the writers and analyzing major works would mean preparing a separate book. Here, I will attempt to analyze just a selected number of writers and their writings. I understand that this is a dangerous exercise for any literary critic, but my only consolation at this point is that I intend to develop a book on this subject after this dissertation.

The Urdu Society of Canada was formed in the 1970s in Toronto; people with an interest in Urdu language and literature came together in this forum. Some attempts at publications were made around the same time. Fortnightly Crescent, which also carried the title of Sada-i-Pakistan, was published with content both in Urdu and English from 1973-1977. It then became Crescent International and was published in Markham, Ontario, from 1977 to 1980. Another publication titled Weekly Jung was launched in Montreal by M. M. Azim in 1973 and became Jung Montreal in 1974 and was published until 1980. Also, Eastern News was published from Mississauga in 1979 in Urdu. Nonetheless, it was the efforts of the Urdu Society that made Urdu prominent in Canada. Regular gatherings and discussions led to the first Canadian Conference on Urdu in 1982, which was attended by local as well as international writers, poets and dignitaries. This conference was held with the collaboration of the University of Toronto's Centre for South Asian Studies. Later, McGill University established a chair of Urdu language and literature.

Urdu literature in Canada has become very rich in the last few years; the number of writers has mushroomed from the few that could be counted on one's fingertips to a huge number in major cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, and Calgary. Some noted writers are Ashfaq Hussain, Shakeela Rafiq, Ikram Brelvi, Jawaid Danish, Khalid Sohail, Wali Alam Shaheen, Kishwar Ghani, Irfana Aziz, Aziz Ahmed, Nasim Syed, Afzal Imam, and Tazeen Hina, among many others. There are a variety of organizations and groups catering to Urdu literature, namely, Canadian Urdu Writers Forum, Writers Forum of Pakistani Canadians, Anjuman-e-Urdu, and Family of the Heart; all of these groups are in the greater Toronto area. Edmonton has a literary association named "Bazm-e-Sukhan" and organizes mushairas as well as musical recitals; Kishwar Ghani, a renowned poet in Edmonton, has been actively promoting the group and Urdu literature and language. An international conference on Urdu literature was organized in Toronto in 2005.

The readership of Urdu writers in Canada is limited because even within the South Asian community itself, there are very few readers of Urdu. In any case, with the passage of time, Urdu literature has evolved. As M. H. K. Qureshi points out, the depiction of Canada in Urdu writing has changed with the passage of time: "When we were new to the land, we looked at Canadians from our miseries – actual or apparent. But now we look at things as Canadians. The perspective has changed. We have found a synthesis between our own identity and our new environment" (Polyphony 37). Qureshi, who has edited An Anthology of Modern Urdu Poetry, in which he selected and translated into English Urdu poets from the Indian subcontinent as well as those in Canada, notes that "the Urdu literature now being produced in North America does not differ appreciably in diction and style from that of India and Pakistan but does bear its own stamp in the themes with which it deals" (Polyphony 37-38). The following poem by Noor A.Sheikh titled "Pierre Elliot Trudeau"[60] written after the death of the Canadian prime minister speaks volumes about Urdu poetry's interest in Canada and Canadians:

> This we knew that you will not forever shine
> On the Canadian firmament like the sun.
> But O, the spring of our garden, you will depart so soon
> This we did not realize.
> Canadian life is now quiet without you
> That glamour is gone from this cold environs
> …
> You have given a new constitution to the nation
> Otherwise it lacked the direction of its destiny.
> The United Nations talks about you
> The world is convinced of your wisdom and foresight.
> The melody you struck on the lyre of peace
> Will one day resonate as a song of peace.
> …
> You were a hope for those who lost their heart in the terraces of Canada
> Where will we find a sympathizer and friend like you?
> (qtd. in Qureshi Polyphony 39).

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[60] Original poem is in Urdu; translated by M. H.Q. Qureshi.

Prime Minister Trudeau's liberal policies aided immigration in the 1970s. South Asian immigrants have generally hailed Trudeau as their 'hero' since he opened the doors to many of them, especially those that had to flee Africa after Idi Amin threw them out. This poem reflects the utmost respect that the community had for Trudeau, and recognizes his contribution to the nation.

Some of these writers are interestingly portraying the guilt of moving to a better life and having left their fellow-countrymen in a troubled, miserable life ridden with poverty. While dreams of a better life in terms of safety as well as materialism may have drawn some of them to the land of peace – Canada - they are not free of the guilt associated with this move. Also, some of these writers, who in their early days were writing about some of the 'classic' Canadian themes such as nature's harshness, racism, or discrimination, are now writing about the loss of their new generation to mainstream Canadian culture. Many of these writers have raised children in Canada, and as with any other immigrants, the children of these writers have either fully or partially lost their language, and have dated or married outside the community (religious or cultural), and the literature is beginning to reflect this lament. When it comes to Urdu writing in Canada, there clearly are two kinds of subject matter – one that is a result of a negative cultural shock and another that is a result of positive cultural acceptance. Negativity results from a deep nostalgia for what has been left behind and what has not been achieved in the new home. Optimistic portrayal highlights Canadian culture in a positive light. Optimistic portrayals have also added to the literature in

Pakistan as they inform Pakistanis of Canadian society. However, most of the time Urdu writers are quite preoccupied with the politics of the subcontinent, and thus issues such as the India-Pakistan partition, growing terrorism and religious fundamentalism in Pakistan, poverty, corruption, and the plight of the downtrodden do rise more often in Urdu-Canadian literature as opposed to other non-official language literatures. A brief look at some of the writers will highlight the thematics of Urdu literature in Canada.

Ikram Brelvi:

Ikram Brelvi was born in India, and moved to Pakistan soon after the partition of India in 1947. He immigrated to Canada in 1976. He was an established and well-known writer both in India and Pakistan. He started as a playwright, but is primarily a novelist; now he also writes essays, columns and short stories. Brelvi is among the oldest and most respected Urdu writers in Canada. He is first and foremost a writer of historical fiction, and thus his novels are historical in nature and content and also have a political background. His first novel Naya Ofaq (New Horizon 1947) is "based on the Bengal famine and focused on the impact of the famine on an artist" (Sohail). His second novel, titled Gardish (Misfortune), was published in 1956. His third novel, Lava, dealing with the partition of India is "a pragmatic novel based on the inward journey of man from [the] soul's dark night to a final ecstatic state of the knowledge of immediate reality, attained through purgation and illumination of the inner self" (Sohail "Encounters"). Brelvi's next novel, Pul Siraat (Treacherous Path to Heaven), was written in Canada, and is "a novel about the Indo-Pak subcontinent in the context of political history" (Sohail "Encounters"). His latest novel, Hasrat-i-Tameer (Desire to Build), published in 2006, deals with the crisis in Afghanistan. The new novel that he is working on "deals with culture, rites and rituals of the Indo-Pak society and aims to provide an exotic veneer to the mosaic of multiculturalism in Canada" (Sohail "Encounters"). Although a majority of Brelvi's writing is placed in the Indian subcontinent, after being in Canada for three decades, his subject matter has drifted toward a more Canadian content.

Khalid Sohail

Khalid Sohail is a writer who stands out not for his creative prowess but for his thematic variations. Sohail is both a psychiatrist by profession and a hardcore secularist Muslim. His collections of poems, stories, travelogues, novellas and essays have been published in English, Urdu and Punjabi. According to his website, his writings "are an attempt to share his humanistic philosophy of life" (Sohail Home Page). He believes that "For our future development as a species we have to transcend the resentments based on class, race, gender, language or religious differences and anger because of the conflicts between the East and West, North and South, first and third world and many other man made divisions" (Sohail Home Page). His recent short story titled "Meetha Zahar" ("Sweet Poison") deals with the influence of Islam on India and Pakistan. The story, written in a symbolic mode, implies that Islam has been like diabetes to the two nations and has done much harm to the subcontinent. Clearly political in nature, the story created a flood of arguments on the website of "The Family of the Heart" group.

Shakila Rafiq

Shakila Rafiq is an Urdu short story writer currently based in Toronto; Rafiq moved to Canada in 1998. She completed her M.A. in Urdu from Karachi University and has to date six collections of short stories to her credit. On her website, she claims that "as she is in Canada for only last few years, her memories of the land where she grew up and received her education are still fresh, and therefore, picks up themes for most of her stories from that soil only instead of searching themes in the alien land" (http://www.shakilarafiq.com).

Rafiq has written extensively; her first novella was Dard hay Apna Saathi (Pain is our Companion 1976). Rafiq's collections of short stories include Kuch Dair Pehlay Neend Say (From Sleep, A While Ago1987), Khushboo kay Jazeeray (Islands of Fragrance 1989), Qitaar main Khara Aadmi (Man Standing in a Queue 1998). She has also written Ismat Aapa: Us Ek Shaam ki Guftagu (Sister Ismat: Conversations of that one Evening 2001), a critical analysis of the works of Ismat Chugtai, one of the most noted Urdu feminist writers; the book has excerpts of Rafiq's chat/interview with Chugtai when Chugtai visited Pakistan. The book received a great deal of attention in India and Pakistan, and now is in a second updated edition. Her latest short story collections are Aasman Talay (Under the Sky 2002) and Tirgi ke Darmiyan (Within Darknesss 2006).

Rafiq's works have been translated into Hindi, Sindhi, and English; she has never tried to write in English herself. She says that a writer writes best in the language that he/she dreams in;[61] she dreams in Urdu and thus believes that is the best language for her creative writing. Rafiq thinks that if necessary she could write in English, but it will not have the same fervor as in Urdu, because English is not her mother-tongue. Also, she asserts that writing is also about self-satisfaction; writing in English so that she can reach a broader audience is like "writing on demand" and she would not do that. As for the subject matter, Rafiq's writing is divided depending on when and where it was written. Most of the writing that she did while living in Pakistan is feminist in nature; Rafiq is a strong critic of the male dominated Pakistani society, and she has fought for women's rights through her short stories. Her writing is mostly in the realistic mode; Yet, she says she has written some stories that are in a "symbolic style" just to answer the critics who claimed that she wrote realistic stories because she was a weak writer. In Canada, her writing has focused on the issues of second and third generation Canadians of South Asian origin, who are growing up in a hybrid culture; she highlights the generation gap that the younger generation feels with the older generation in terms of cultural, social, and religious values. At least eight stories of her last short story collection Tirgi ke Darmiyan focus on Canadian subject matter. She agrees that her creativity has been influenced by her move to Canada. She strongly disagrees with those writers who claim that they are not affected by the place that they inhabit. She asks: "If you are standing under the sun, how can you not feel the heat? How can you not get inspired by where you are?" (Interview). Although she believes that writing is certainly affected by where one is, she is against segregation. Currently she is writing short stories that focus on Canadian seniors; after having lived in a senior's home for a couple of years, she says that she felt that isolation was the biggest challenge that Canadian seniors face, and she is trying to highlight that in her new set of stories. She believes that the issues that humans face are the same everywhere, albeit in different forms and strengths. Thus, moving to Canada has just given her a different set of issues to work with. She wrote about Canada only when she felt she had understood and felt what Canadians go through. She would not write about Canada "on demand" in order to be considered a Canadian writer.

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[61] I met with Shakila Rafiq in Toronto in May 2007; parts of this analysis are based on my talk with her.

Rafiq has made a very interesting point about her readership. Critics have often pointed out that writers writing in non-official languages tend to focus on non-Canadian issues because they are published and read in their 'home' countries; but Rafiq mentions that since a lot of Pakistani families now have either close or distant relatives in Canada, they are, in fact, very interested in reading about what is happening in Canada, and her short stories are a medium through which they keep themselves abreast of the Canadian scene. In her short story titled "Give me the remote,"[62] Rafiq's narrator laments the fact that he has left a troubled nation behind and feels that he has been selfish by immigrating to Canada; while watching news on CNN, he is overcome by this feeling:

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[62] Translated from Urdu by Dr. Khalid Sohail

> I am realizing how egocentric we have become. We have immigrated to the land of fortune to enjoy life and live in luxury. When I look at the sunken faces and emaciated bodies of Somali and Ethiopian children, I can count their ribs. They remind me of spare ribs of Swiss Chalet and I feel a choking sensation in my throat. I drink a sip of coke to clear my throat and look away for a while. When I look back at the screen I see the atrocities of Kashmir, Bosnia, Lebanon and Palestine. (Rafiq Home Page)

He then asks himself: "What is the difference in living in this or that country, in this or that community, in this or that continent?" and "Would we have starved to death in our homelands eating one loaf of bread rather than two?" (Rafiq Home Page). He concludes that:

> The reality is that we are all afraid of death. In our short lives on earth we want to have and collect all we can. Our greed has no limit. It is our lust to own more that forces us to emigrate to different countries and continents and we call it 'emigration", what a euphemism. In our attempt to deceive others we end up deceiving ourselves. (Rafiq Home Page)

This narrator travels a long distance to get Urdu newspapers to read the news from his country; however, after having read the newspaper he gets "depressed and then feel(s) overwhelmed by guilt" and worries about his native country -

> its poverty, bigotry and prejudice. Everybody is trying to deceive others to be successful. I feel guilty because people in my small village in the East are suffering while I am enjoying a luxurious life in a big city in the West. "Why do people in the West have everything we are deprived of?" I ask myself. (Rafiq Home Page)

Rafiq's stories clearly inhabit a space that is between Pakistan and Canada, poverty and prosperity, satisfaction and guilt.

Ashfaq Hussain

Ashfaq Hussain Zaidi, mostly known as Ashfaq Hussain in literary circles, is one of the most well-known and recognized poets in Urdu Canadian literary circles. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1951, Hussain moved to Canada in 1980 after earning an M.A. in Urdu literature from Karachi University. He currently hosts a show titled "Urdu Rang" on Asian Television Network. Besides being a poet, Hussain is a renowned scholar on the works of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, one of the most noted poets of the Urdu literary world, considered the greatest Urdu poet after Iqbal. Hussain is one of the few immigrants who has tirelessly worked towards the preservation and promotion of Urdu language and literature in Canada. He launched an Urdu journal titled Urdu International in 1982. The seeds of this journal were sown in 1980 when Faiz Ahmed Faiz visited Canada. The journal sought to be a bridge between Urdu writers in Canada and those in the Indian subcontinent. Publishing three issues per year, the journal survived for thirteen issues. Urdu International has been a historic landmark in Urdu-Canadian history, and a couple of theses have been written on the journal.[63] Hussain's book title Habib-e-amber-dast (Friend under the Sky 1992) documents Urdu literature and culture in Canada with reference to Faiz; it also elaborates on how Faiz's trips to Canada in fact promoted Urdu literature in Canada.

Hussain's poetry has been greeted with much respect and admiration in the Urdu literary circles in Canada and abroad. That Day will Dawn is the collection of Hussain's Urdu poetry with English translations published in Toronto in 1985. David J. Mathews of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, thus analyzes Hussain's poetry:

> Love, dreams, and disillusions are the items which predominate in the poetry of Ashfaq Hussain. Love for a son whose future must be brighter than his father's; dreams of an age when the Indian Ocean lapped on more illustrious shores; disillusion with western cities, where the skyscrapers and dirty streets poignantly remind the poet of his self-imposed exile. The items are well-known from the Urdu Poetry of all ages . . . (Hussain, That Day 6)

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[63] Khudabaksh Oriental Library, Patna, Bihar did a special supplement on Urdu International; Punjab University, Lahore did some research on Urdu International in 1995 – the research findings were published by Dr. Sayed Meraj Nayyer in 1996.

Mohamad Hasan of Jawarhal Nehru University, Delhi, India comments that Hussain's poetry

> is perhaps the first specimen of forward-looking émigré poetry in Urdu, full of optimism and hope. It echoes the melody of the nascent cosmopolitan culture which is being slowly getting absorbed in the classical traditions of Urdu Poetry, thus adding a new dimension of wider awareness and more subtle sensibility of the modern ethos. (Hussain, That Day 9)

Then again, the traditional diasporic themes of loss of home and alienation are not absent from Hussain's poetry. His poem titled "The Curse of Generations"[64] is a clear example of this:

> Land, the ocean of Love;
> Life inherent in its waves
> One's kinship to the land
> is the most sacred
> Of all the world's relationships,
> From the womb of the earth
> Spring thousands of the new seasons,
> Land is the ultimate reality
> In quest of this reality
> I wander

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[64] Originally titled "naslo ke azab" in Urdu and translated by Shehla Burney.

endlessly
for my kinship
with my land
is severed.
My being is divided
into a thousand fragments
As a penance
I still bear
The curse of generations
God, I am tired
Join me to my land again
make me live for ever. (Hussain, That Day 13-14)

The Western world full of skyscrapers that seemed beautiful from far loses its luster when Hussain is actually in that world and in pain at losing the Old World:

but today I am in this world
in the neighbourhood of skyscrapers
near a dirty subway station
next to me an artist
hollow-faced, bereft of life
plays on the guitar
shall I applaud the artistry of his music

or place in his empty hand
the essence of my past dreams? (Hussain 16)[65]

Hussain's pre-occupation with the past and the dreams that are left behind, as well as the realities of life in the adopted city are intertwined here. Husain feels empathy for the guitarist, but at the same time has little to offer him; his compassion for the guitarist soon turns into one for himself. Elsewhere Hussain compares the migrant's state of in-betweenness to a state of "gypsyhood":

The fruit of migration is not our fate
Parting from the land, we are homeless
And have no place.
That sea
Where we are drowned is not ours
Immanent in its name,
Now there is not a panorama that is ours.
How long can we bear the gifts of strangers
And beat our own heads?
No stone is ours
Sitting on the edge of the lane of gypsyhood
No walk is ours, no door is ours.
A flock of birds heralds the fall of evening
As a thought crosses, this is no home of ours. (Hussain 32-33)[66]

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[65] "In the Neighbourhood of Skyscrapers" translated by Shehla Burney from the Urdu original titled "Unchi Imaraton ke mohalle men."

Hussain clearly feels that he is a stranger in a land where he couldn't call anything 'his own.' The feeling of not belonging anywhere, that is, being stuck between 'here' and 'there' is clearly evident. Hussain says[67] one should write in the "language of excellence;" he insists that language should not be a barrier to creativity and that one should write in a language that one feels competent in.

Shaheen:

Wali Alam Shaheen, popularly known as Shaheen, has been living in Canada since 1974. A poet of great distinction, Shaheen, besides having published several collections of poetry, is also the editor of Urdu Canada, a journal in English meant for Canadians of both Urdu and non-Urdu background that ran successfully from 1986 to 1990. Shaheen's poetry collections include Raag-e-Saaz (Lute's Vein 1967) and Bay Nishaan (Traceless 1984) among others. Various places embed his poetry – Canada, Vietnam, Palestine, Pakistan and Bangladesh. His poem titled "A Poem of the City of Being"[68] is placed in Ottawa:

> Standing by the Rideau Canal, I think:
> These dense green trees and sun are still the same;
> Sunlight still has the warmth of young bodies,
> Eyes and brows are still the same,
> So are the embellishments of beauty.

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[66] "Homeless" translated by Shehla Burney from the original Urdu title "Beghar."

[67] I met with Ashfaq Hussain in Toronto in May 2007 and interviewed him about his works.

[68] "Quria-e-Jan Ki Aik Nazm" translated by Baidar Bakht and Leslie Lavigne in Dreams and Destinations

When I left home, it occurred to me many times
That, if there is to be a search,
Then eyes must wander,
Indiscretion would dance in every open eye;
Enlightenment would lead to wandering.

But,
There wasn't such an emptiness before
Each day passes, leaving just more darkness;
Each night passes, leaving just a sense of chaos.

It's hard to even imagine
That someone in the crowds of this strange city,
Could be my own.
Pain, the old companion of my sleepless eyes,
Is too tired for tears (Khan, Dreams 52).[69]

Shaheen is one of those rare Urdu poets who are well versed in both ghazal and nazm[70] forms. Shaheen's poetry "has a distinctive style and a sensibility that speaks of the conditions surrounding human existence, his own dreams, and the destinations he perceives for modern man. While he expresses grief over the loss of cherished values, he also sees hope in the midst of cynicism and skepticism of his age" (Khan, Dreams 13). Shaheen has had a remarkable life which certainly influences his poetry. As a child he witnessed the murder of his mother and brother during the riots that followed the partition of India and Pakistan; he fled to East Pakistan but history repeated itself as East Pakistan became Bangladesh. He then, moved to Pakistan and at last came to Canada in search of non-violence and peace. His poetry thus reflects on the wider global issues and the search for peace. For example:

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[69] Originally titled "Quria-e-Jan Aik Nazm;" translated by Baidar Bakht and Leslie Lavigne.

[70] "The *nazm* and *ghazal* genres are quite different from each other in prosodic requirements and it is rare to see a poet master both genres at the same time. While Urdu *nazm* could be likened to English poems (rhymed, blank and free modes of verse), the Urdu *ghazal* has no parallel in the West. Ghazal is essentially a short lyric with requirements of both metre and rhyme. The two halves of the first couplet and the second line of the remaining couplets must rhyme. A couplet in *ghazal* must also be a complete semantic entity and must express a complete and fully integrated poetic experience. Because of its strict prosodic requirements, the *ghazal* mode indeed offers a

> Unconsciously, a poem of Yeats
> Moves through my memory,
> Prompting me to think:
> Life is an eternal search,
> An endless search in vain.
> But, at that very moment,

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greater challenge to the poet than *nazm*. Despite its limitations, the Urdu *ghazal* as a means of poetic expression has survived to date and its continued popularity in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent is the testimony of the fact that *ghazal* is an integral part of the culture of the people of that subcontinent, especially Muslims. Although the tradition of *ghazal* goes back to the Arab lands at least as far back as the dawn of Islam, the present form of *ghazal* was crystallized in Iran after the advent of Islam. Its introduction and flowering in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was also the direct result of the Muslim influence. The traditional themes of *ghazal*, both in Iran and the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, have been associated with love. Literally also *ghazal* conveys the same sense. Over the centuries, however, the themes of *ghazal* have not always been limited to love and both classical and modern poets such as Mir, Momin, Ghalib, Iqbal, Firaq and Faiz, have successfully and extensively expressed their philosophical and mystical messages through the medium of *ghazal*" (Khan, Dreams 17).

On the lips of the sleeping form beside me,
Awakes a Mona Lisa smile.
Which makes me want to rush like Archimedes
To shout Eureka
To the streets and to the houses,
To the temples, to the taverns
Proclaiming to the world
The essence of my discovery. (Khan, Dreams 14)[71]

Shaheen's poetry is very reflective of the multicultural country that he has adopted. As Abdul Q. Zia notes, Shaheen "has responded well to the living beauty, marvels, and spirit of this country which flowed all around him" (28). Shaheen's poetry is certainly a reflection of the beautiful world of Urdu writing in Canada which deserves much more attention and analysis than it has attracted so far.

Besides the work of the above mentioned and other writers, Urdu literary activity in Canada has flourished in various other ways. The University of Toronto Press published some issues of Urdu International, the literary journal mentioned above. McGill University has come out with a series of Urdu books for children as part of a project that was edited by Sajida Alvi.

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[71] Translated by Baidar Bakht and Leslie Lavigne

Punjabi Literature in Canada[72]

Punjabi is the official language of the province of Punjab in India. It has estimated thirty million speakers in India and about eighty million in Pakistan; a considerable number of speakers of Punjabi live in the U.K., the U.S. and Canada (Mahal ix). Punjabi is close to Sanskrit and is influenced by Arabic and Persian. The Punjabi community has been one of the oldest among the South Asian communities in Canada. Naturally, Punjabi literature has also existed for a long time. One of the most prominent Punjabi-Canadian writers is Surjeet Kalsey. Besides writing and translating Punjabi poetry, Kalsey has also edited an anthology entitled Saffron Leaves: An Anthology of Canadian Punjabi Poetry (1992). Some of her Punjabi books include Sat Paryan (Distant Women 1994) and Paunan Nal Guftagoo (Speaking to the Winds1979). She is also the editor and translator of Glimpses of Punjabi Poetry: An Anthology in English Translation (1993). Foot Prints of Silence: Poems and Modern Punjabi Poetry: an anthology (1978) are her other works. Other than the anthologies, her creative works deal mostly with issues of women's rights, especially those of South Asian women who face the double trauma of abiding by the 'home' traditions and culture which are mostly not favorable to women, and discrimination in Canadian society. Kalsey's "Punjabi Literature in Canada" is a part of the report on South Asian writing by Sugunasiri and is one of the earliest records of Punjabi literature in

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[72] I do not read Punjabi, thus, it has not been possible to add a detailed survey of the same. I have included a brief overview here so as to give some idea of the work in this language. For further information, see Sugunasiri.

Canada. Ajmer Rode, another Punjabi Canadian writer, is now part of the syllabus of modern Punjabi poetry in Indian universities. Rode's play Komagata Maru, as the title suggests, deals with that chapter of Canadian history which has left not so desirable memories for the South Asian community, especially the Punjabi community as a majority of the passengers on the ship Komagata Maru hailed from Punjab. Rode is also a well-known poet and has published about eleven books of poetry; it is a pity that his contribution has gone unnoticed in Canada. His poetry collection Leela is the first non-English book published by Rainbird Press in Vancouver. Stephen Gill's Green Snow is an anthology which includes three Punjabi poets, namely, Ravi Ravinder, Rampuri Gurchuran, and Sidhu Guremel. Kalsey in her report notes that most of Punjabi poetry has revolved around Canadian as well as Indian subjects, and their poetry is very much defined by their presence in Canada. Some Punjabi fiction writers include Amarjit Chahal, Paramjit Gill, and Giani Kesar Singh, among others. Currently, there are over one hundred and fifty Punjabi writers in Canada. Again, while there are scattered studies, no extensive literary history of Punjabi literature in Canada exists so far.

Some Observations

While some Canadian publishers are publishing works in heritage languages, there are some practical problems in getting these writers published here. Given that there is not much interest in these writers outside of their linguistic groups, publishers are hesitant to take on their books. Most of the time, the writer is asked to pay for the publication or to buy a certain number of copies. The situation is the same when they get published in their home countries, unless and until they know a publisher who is willing to oblige. Nonetheless, when the writers publish in either India or Pakistan, for example, their publication costs go down drastically due to exchange rates. These writers then sell the books in Canada in dollars at the gathering of writers or other literary events. They are able to keep the price very low as they are published outside the country, and they are also able to recover their cost by selling the books in dollars. In an ideal world, a writer should not have to do this; however, this is the reality of the literary world.

Comparatively speaking, Gujarati writing is the most hybrid when it comes to its experimentation with language; Urdu writers, by contrast, are not too fond of linguistic hybridity. Urdu has always been at the centre of debate when it comes to purity of language; looking at literary histories, it is evident that Urdu writers are very proud of their language and experimentation within the language itself. Yet, bringing in other languages within Urdu has not been much of an acceptable phenomenon. Also, most of the Urdu writing produced in Canada is read in Pakistan; language politics is very strong in Pakistan with Urdu always at the centre of conflict, competing against Sindhi and Punjabi. Thus, the proponents of Urdu feel intensely pressured to preserve the language; whereas for Gujarati writers, there is no such conflict, and the Gujarati audience is more receptive of the use of English within Gujarati writing. In fact, since the script is after all Gujarati, the younger generation at times considers this as an opportunity to learn some English words, as the meaning of the word is most of the times clear from the context. The same is true of Hindi writing, where linguistic hybridity is used and accepted.

Thus, it seems that both for writers writing in English as well as in vernacular languages, linguistic hybridity is a means of transferring culture; writers writing in English but using non-English languages do so to enlighten their Western audiences, and those writing in non-English languages use English in their works to educate the audiences 'back home.' Accordingly, the question that needs to be asked is: would these writers use different languages in their writing if they were not trying to appeal to the particular audiences that they do? For the non-English language writers, if the audience were in Canada, there might not be a need to use English words; in fact, they may do otherwise to demonstrate their command over the vernacular language.

If Canada would have adopted an official policy of multilingualism, it would have added a lot to the contribution that these writers make. Alongside two official languages which may be used for all the official correspondence, the recognition of all the other languages that Canadians know would have been very beneficial to the Canadian literary scene. With official recognition would come some funding that would help good writers to produce without having to worry about making a living. Although the policy of multiculturalism has not solved all our social problems when it comes to the intermingling of different cultures, it has at least put some pressure on recognizing other cultures. The same would have been true of multilingualism; writers writing in non-English or non-French languages may not have become celebrity writers, yet they would have been recognized much more if an official multilingualism policy would have been in place. University departments would then have made attempts to teach some of these writers; newspapers and journals would have felt pressured to publish reviews of the books that are now considered in non-official languages; government departments would have made better attempts at funding these writers; and there would be awards in place to recognize the good work of these writers. It would have also led to more translations of these works, which would have made their literary writings available to those who do not read the language. But currently there is no such policy in place, and it is less likely to come into existence in any near future. Batts had rightly pointed out that

> the likelihood of a further development of Canadian literature in non-official languages from Europe and South America seems remote. Literature in Punjabi may well continue to develop because of the close political, religious, and social ties that are maintained between Punjab, and (primarily western) Canada, and the recent influx of Chinese-speaking immigrants, most of them far better educated than those who entered Canada from China in the 19th century, suggest that a Chinese Canadian literature may well develop early this century. (769)

Literature in South Asian languages has flourished; in fact, it is only now that Urdu literature has reached a certain peak, and Gujarati and Hindi writing are just gaining momentum. While there is an extensive amount of literature in non-official languages, any systematic study of the same has been marginalized. Scholars have not given much attention to this body of writing and so, while there is ample critical work on writing in English, critical work on non-official language writing is almost non-existent. Other than attempts to provide some sporadic bibliographical data, there has been a lack of any critical evaluation of the abundance of novels, short stories, poetry, travelogues written in South Asian languages. There is a need to get involved in studying the structure, style, and themes of these works, and attention needs to be paid to the contribution of South Asian Canadian community. The South Asian scholars who know the language and have an understanding of these literatures have not made any effort to bring these writings to the forefront. My thesis is an attempt to put this marginalized body of writing in the context of Canadian literature. Some of the books in unofficial languages, especially those that have literary value, need to be translated, read, written about, and made available to Canadian readers. Study of these texts will give Canadian readers a chance to study different aspects of South Asian history, culture, and language. For example, no South Asian Canadian writer writing in English has written much on the international politics of the subcontinent (issues such as the partition of India and Pakistan, and the subsequent partition of Pakistan and Bangladesh), whereas it permeates Urdu Canadian writing to a great extent. Since the English writers are writing for a broader audience, they tend to limit their subject matter to the interests of the larger audience, but it is the writers writing in heritage languages that are truly making an attempt to present the real culture and language and also the issues that are close to the hearts of the people of the subcontinent.

In fact, many other language groups within the South Asian tradition also need to be delved into. While there is activity in Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, and other languages, I have not been able to look at them here due to my lack of knowledge of these languages. As Pivato rightly puts it, this writing "is providing an opportunity to study the diversity of Canadian literature and the desire to re-interpret our literary culture" (Echo 61).

I believe that translation is also one way of bringing the writings in non-official languages to the attention of the Canadian public at large. While it may seem ironic to argue that heritage language writers will be better served in English, as a comparatist I can not resist the suggestion. If more books are made available in translation, it will in turn encourage Canadian scholars to survey ethnic minority writings further. I believe that the South Asian community has failed in taking this seriously and making any effort whatsoever to translate the works of writers such as Ikram Brelvi, Shakila Rafiq, Jay Gajjar, and others who certainly deserve their due recognition. The fact that there is not a single anthology of South Asian works in translation is lamentable and pathetic. After all, for a comparatist, there is nothing more heartbreaking than to know that literature does not reach people because language is a barrier. In today's world, "with emergence of multilingual society all over the globe and reduction of the globe to a village, translation has emerged as an invisible yet indispensable bridge not only for literary but for socio-cultural and even commercial transactions as well" (Singh ix). What Amitav Ghosh notes with reference to India is apt for Canada as well: "In a country as multilingual as ours unless you have really good translations, you are doomed" (qtd. in Singh ix). In the Canadian context, translation can serve as a bridge between cultures and thus help in not only promoting cultures and literatures but also preserving them. After all, how are the second or third or fourth generation descendants of Hindi, Urdu, or for that matter any language writer to learn of the experiences of their forefathers if the works are not available in translation? Experience tells us that even if subsequent generations of immigrants maintain verbal knowledge of heritage languages, many do not maintain reading ability; this is clear from the situation of languages such as Hungarian, Czech and Ukrainian. When I propose this I am aware of the dangers of translation and in no way am I suggesting that attempts should not be made at reading the works in the original. I fully empathize with Haun Sassy who in his ACLA report laments that "no longer apologetic for teaching works they do not read in the original, some comparatists even present this necessity as a virtue, the consequence of a willingness to deal with remote traditions and to take collaborative risks" (14). Even the earlier reports, namely, the Levin and the Greene reports, had raised concerns about works being read in translation. But the Bernheimer Report states that:

> While the necessity and unique benefits of a deep knowledge of foreign languages must continue to be stressed, the old hostilities

> toward translation should be mitigated. In fact, translation can well be seen as a paradigm for larger problems of understanding and interpretation across different discursive traditions. Comparative Literature, it could be said, aims to explain both what is lost and what is gained in translations between the distinct vale systems of different cultures, media, disciplines, and institutions. (44)

While one cannot disagree with Saussy's argument for reading the works in original and learning foreign languages, I assent with David Damrosch who furthers the argument in his response and suggests that it is better to read in translation rather than not read at all ("Hypercanonical Age" 51). This is because "A culture's norms and needs profoundly shape the selection of works that enter into it as world literature, influencing the ways they are translated, marketed and read" (World Literature 26). Comparing immigrant writing in English, which has always been at the centre of controversy about its "Canadianness" as well as its thematic concerns, to the writings in languages other than English, Kanaganayakam makes a similar observation:

> writings in languages other than English appear to be far more comfortable invoking the land and the people with much greater confidence and authority. Both in fiction and in poetry the literature that deals with Canada accounts for a substantial body of vernacular writing. And they are not necessarily about race or ethnicity or forms of discrimination. Rather, they are about the land and its effect on the world

> view of the immigrant. Space, for instance, is an enduring theme in local literatures, where the private and the public, the sacred and the secular intersect in ways that alter social relations in a significant manner. A short story written in the vernacular, translated into English, is likely to display a texture that is more recognizably "Canadian" than texts written in English. ("Spattering Dung"164-65)

Arguing that literary history seldom takes this writing into consideration, Kanaganayakam writes that in 'home' countries this writing "is more often considered "diasporic" in ways that English writing is not" ("Spattering Dung,"165)[73]. He rightly argues though, that "the richness and multiplicity of immigrant writing cannot be ignored without diminishing the scope and breadth of Canadian literature" (174).

Concluding that the South Asian Canadian fiction written in English does not share many similarities except "note of protest," Frank Birbalsingh in his essay writes that "Literature written by South Asian Canadian in South Asian languages might be expected to reflect stronger similarities" (59). This is hardly the case as the above study has demonstrated. With regards to literature in heritage languages, much like Sandahl, Birbalsingh also argues that "discouraging as it sounds, such a literature is unlikely to flourish in Canada" (59). The literature has certainly flourished, depending on how one defines the term. What has not happened is that it has still not received the recognition that it deserves, both within and outside the South Asian community. Birbalsingh further argues that "the experience of other Old World cultural groups in North America does not auger well for writing in languages other than English" and that Jewish people no longer produce in Yiddish or Hebrew, citing the examples of Saul Bellow, Mordecai Richler and others (59). He predicts and hopes that most South Asian writers will produce in English but their subjects will have both Canadian as well as South Asian content, much like Indo-Caribbean writer V. S Naipaul. This argument is not only short-sighted but undesirable in a multicultural country such as Canada. As difficult as the task is, attempts have to be made not only to preserve the languages for the sake of following generations,[74] but also to recognize the multilingual reality of this country and its literature. Comparing the fate of the writer writing in heritage languages to that of an Aboriginal writer, Blodgett argues that

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[73] Before coming to this conclusion, Kanaganayakam elaborates on why he thinks that vernacular writers have more 'Canadian' content. He writes that people who do not speak English very well stay in their 'own' groups in order to interact. Since they stay in their ethnic groups they are able to "see Canada on their own terms" and that "the sense of being on the inside enables a sense of belonging and empowerment" ("Spattering Dung,"165). I absolutely disagree with him and think that this is unfair to those who speak English and mingle with those outside 'their ethnic group.' As I have argued earlier, these writers use or non-use of Canadian content has more to do with their audience and what the audience expects of them. While the writer is under no obligation to provide what the readers expect of him/her, the economics of the publishing industry do certainly affect what they choose to write. In fact, a lot in this article is debatable, however, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to get into.

> both immigrant and Native histories inscribe statements about the status of language because their histories face the problem of continuous linguistic erosion in a predominantly bilingual society. Language and history

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[74] As Robert F. Harney notes, "the transmission of the immigrant's language to his or her Canadian-educated or Canadian-born children could never be, nor did parents wish it to be, simply linguistic, a culturally neutral act" (1). For detailed analysis of heritage language pedagogy see Polyphony, Vol. II, 1989.

> constitute the subject, and all three share the continuous presence of a state of crisis in which first language, then history, and finally the subject may disappear. (Five 224)

The South Asian community, or any other community for that matter, has to acknowledge that preservation of language is the first step towards recognition of their culture and identity. In order that South Asian language and culture does not get erased, it is imperative not only that the writer be recognized no matter what language he writes in, but also that he be chronicled in history pages, otherwise, Canada's next generations will lose a chapter in history.

CHAPTER V

The multiracial and multiethnic nature of this country is made real to us – is written into our consciousness of what it means to be Canadian – by Canadian writers. To read their writing here in a multicultural context is not to homogenize differences, nor to forget that the French and British are themselves 'ethnic' and different. It is to recognize that literature depends on the whole of culture, of history and social traditions, without reducing diversity to ethno cultural enclaves. It is, in the end, to help ourselves understand that there are ways of seeing the world, and of writing in and about it, that may be different from our own ways – whatever that might be – and valuable because of that difference.

- Linda Hutcheon, Other Solitudes 5.

English versus Heritage Languages: A Comparative Analysis

Having gone through the intricacies of both South Asian writing in English as well as in heritage languages, I would now like to make a brief comparative analysis of the two. While I have so far demonstrated why and how Anglophone writers use heritage languages within their writing, and also how heritage language literature has evolved with time in Canada, in this chapter I will demonstrate where these writers share similarities and differences. While this comparison is the mandate of the field of Comparative Literature, it also helps in understanding where the tradition of South Asian Canadian literature is heading.

If we were to compare South Asian writing in English with South Asian writing in heritage languages, some broader conclusions can be made:

- Heritage language writing has a longer history than English language writing. Given that the Punjabi community came very early in the twentieth century, there was an oral tradition as well as some written work; later in the 1950s we saw the evolution of Gujarati writing. Compared to this, English language writing came up in the1960s with the coming of more educated and professional immigrants. However, in terms of recognition, writing in English is of course more widely known as opposed to heritage language writing. Due to the reach of the English language, writing in English has received not only appreciation from readers but has also been credited with many awards including the top Canadian awards – the Giller Prize and Governor General's Award. On the other hand, heritage language writers are still struggling to draw attention to themselves as writers. While the language barrier is one obvious reason for this, the lack of any systematic attempt by the South Asian community to acknowledge, appreciate and translate these literary productions is equally to be blamed.

- Lack of recognition is a sore point for writers in heritage languages; desire for respect and acceptance as Canadian writers is certainly there. While they do get published in community newspapers in various cities in Canada, most of the writers are aware that the community newspapers are mostly advertising vehicles and people picking up these 'free' papers at grocery stores are more interested in sale prices rather than in serious literary work. Poems and short stories get lost in the jungle of colorful commercials. As there is no other medium of getting recognized in Canada, these writers resort to publishing in 'home' countries, and some do get published in highly acclaimed literary journals in India – Jay Gajjar and Ashfaq Hussain are clear examples. Given that there is no clear market for heritage language writing, publishers are usually hesitant to publish the works and mostly ask the writers to carry the cost. I strongly believe that the Canadian government needs to make a very active attempt at creating grants for publishing works in heritage languages. Active grants also need to be set for translation of these works.

- As far as the Canadian content[75] of the writing is concerned, writers writing in heritage languages are much more engrossed in Canada as opposed to those writing in English. Works of Jay Gajjar, Ikram Brelvi, Shakila Rafiq and Khalid Sohail are proof of the same. In English, while Mistry has written a few stories dealing with Canada[76] and Vassanji's No New Land deals with immigrant life in Canada, most of the English language writers have written about the lands that they have left behind. Mistry's writing preeminently deals with India, especially Bombay, Vassanji's novels are placed in East Africa; Badami's novels are again housed in India.[77] Compared to this, heritage language writers have divided their attention equally; most of the writers, especially those that have lived in Canada for more than a decade or two, tend to write mostly about Canada. For example, Jay Gajjar's current writing deals with very specific Canadian subjects such as St. Patrick's Day or Canada Day; his characters are also from varied backgrounds – Indian as well as non-Indian. Ashfaq Hussain's poetry deals with the trauma of immigration.[78]

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[75] As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, I do not think that Canadian content is important in recognizing or identifying these writers as Canadian writers; however, as the point is often raised when discussing ethnic minority writing in Canada, I am adding this point to answer those queries as well as to add the dimension to this comparison.

[76] Especially "Squatter" and "Swimming Lessons"

[77] Badami's latest novel Can you hear the Nightbird call? is placed in both India and Canada but again deals with an Indian family.

[78] Uma Parameswaran complains in her essay titled "Ganga in the Assiniboine" that neither the writers writing in English nor those writing in heritage language have paid attention to Canadian content or setting in their works: "except for rare pieces, like a drama on the *Komagata Maru* episode, produced in 1979, these writers seem to have altogether eschewed the Canadian setting" (85). Fortunately this has now changed, especially with the writing in heritage languages.

- When the writers do deal with the subjects of their homeland, political and social structures seem to dominate the content for both English as well as heritage language writers. Mistry has written about the imposition of the Emergency during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's reign, the treatment of minorities, especially Muslims and Parsis, in India, and about the downtrodden people and Dalits in the Indian social structures. Vassanji has concentrated on the political structure of east Africa; Badami has written about women in India, and her latest novel also focuses on the Komagata Maru incident, drawing attention to past racist policies in Canada. Within heritage language writing, Urdu writers are quite preoccupied with the Partition of India. Urdu itself has been a site of controversy, as it has been labeled as a 'Muslim language' since Pakistan adopted it as its national language and as Persian script is used for writing. Also, Urdu writers demonstrate a deep concern for the people that are left writhing in poverty in their 'home' countries. Conversely, Hindi and Gujarati writers deal mostly with day-to-day life issues, such as marriage, relationships, romance, festivals, celebrations, traditions, and rituals.
- The earlier writing both in English as well as heritage languages deals a lot with the problems of adjusting to the harsh Canadian environment – both socially and environmentally. Racial discrimination faced by people in the 1960s and 70s takes central stage combined with the feelings of nostalgia and a sense of displacement. But time seems to have healed

these emotions and most writers who have written for a long time in Canada have moved away from these subjects. Of course, this has been aided by the official policy of multiculturalism and the changing Canadian social environment in which diversity has become more prominent and acceptable.

- One important difference to be noted is that almost all the writers in heritage languages have migrated to Canada directly from the Indian subcontinent, while among those writing in English, many are in a second diaspora. For example, Mistry is from the Parsi community which originally migrated to India from Iran for fear of persecution; Vassanji is of Indian origin, but he was born and brought up in Africa, and did not visit India until the 1990s. This also has some impact on their writing; Mistry's exposition of minority rights violation in India has certainly to do with the minority status of Parsis in India; while Parsis became very prominent financially, they have always been accused of being too Westernized. While Vassanji writes of Africa and African politics, his characters are mostly from what he calls the 'Shamsi' community, which is his term for the Ismaili community; Ismaili Muslims are originally from the Indian subcontinent and have mostly preserved their language, traditions, and customs from India.

Most of the heritage language writers are thus first generation immigrants; they come well equipped with the language. Nevertheless, the language they bring is generally lost in the diaspora, that is, subsequent generations may be versed in oral skills of a particular language, but they rarely have reading or writing skills. Second generation writers invariably write in English. This means that the heritage language writing will survive as long as we have new immigrants coming to the country. As soon as immigration from certain linguistic groups subsides, so will the writing of that particular group. This has already happened with languages such as Ukrainian and Hungarian; they had rich literary traditions in their language, which are now barely visible in Canada because there is hardly any more new immigration from these countries.

- Comfort level is another issue when it comes to deciding which language to write in. Most of the writers writing in English are very competent and comfortable in the language; their use of words from other languages is a conscious exercise and does not arise from a lack of knowledge of the English language (as elaborated earlier with reference to criticism of Mistry's work). Conversely, heritage language writers clearly feel that they are more comfortable writing in their mother tongue, although for some of them a command of English is not an issue. For example, Suresh Kumar Goyal, who has written over two hundred academic papers in English, is more at ease in Hindi when it comes to creative writing. For most of the writers, creative writing is an emotional exercise and the mother tongue is closer to their heart than the acquired language. While for those writing in English, choice of language is at times a political issue, for those writing in heritage languages, it is not a political choice but an emotional choice. Moreover, some of the writers writing in heritage languages have not felt competent enough in English. Some have learnt enough English to be able to carry on their day-to-day conversations in Canada, but they clearly have not mastered the language for creative productivity.

- Some writers writing in heritage languages create in more than one language. For example, Khalid Sohail writes in English as well as Urdu but regrets the fact that he cannot write in Punjabi, which in fact is his mother tongue; he acquired both English as well as Urdu in Pakistan as part of his school education, but never learned to read or write in Punjabi which was spoken at home. Thus while Sohail knew the Punjabi dialect, he did not know the literary language. Smita Bhagwat writes both in Gujarati and Marathi. But, the majority of the writers in heritage languages are unilingual. Some have tried their hands at English, but except for Khalid Sohail, none have been successful.
- Given the difference in readership of the two groups, there is also what I call an 'education' component to South Asian Canadian writing. The readership of writers writing in English is international. Thus they are also concerned about informing readers about Indian languages, traditions, religions, customs and cultural aspects. Mistry has clearly demonstrated in

his interviews that he wants to write about the Parsi community in history through his literary works. Thus, for a reader, his novels also serve as a study ground for Parsi culture, their religion – Zoroastrianism, their day-to-day customs, and religious practices, as well as their Persianized Gujarati language. Vassanji's books can educate people about the Ismaili community, as well as their life in Africa which is heavily influenced by Indian customs, traditions, and language. In fact, it seems that both Mistry and Vassanji have engraved their respective communities, namely, Parsi and Ismaili, in the literary world.

Nevertheless, writers in heritage languages know that they are going to be read mostly in their 'home' countries; their settings are thus targeted to readers in the Indian subcontinent. Vassanji notes that a Punjabi writer in Canada does not need to inform the Punjabi community about Punjab; his works (and this may be true of writers of any other language) "in contrast to their English counterparts, deal more with the realities of life in Urban Canada – corruption in the communities, the role of women, the dangers of communal disintegration" ("The Postcolonial Writer" 67). Stories by Suresh Kumar Goyal and Jay Gajjar clearly read as active attempts at bringing Canada to the world. They have distinct descriptions of Canadian weather, different social customs, especially relating to dating and choosing a marriage partner; there is also representation of the materialistic life which includes description of houses, cars, and malls.

These narratives not only give people back 'home' a glimpse into life in Canada but also create a sort of a 'dream world' for them. Readers are interested in these settings and subjects either to know about life in the West or because often they have friends or families in Canada and these stories are just a way for them to know a bit about that side of the world which they may never see. However, at times, in an attempt to 'educate' their audiences about differences in life in the East and the West, writers become chastising; this is especially true of Shakila Rafiq, who clearly feels that some Eastern values are better than Western ones. While Rafiq appreciates Western freedom and liberal values, her stories (those written after she moved to Canada and those that are based in Canada) are critical of some Western traditions, such as sexual freedom and the treatment of seniors. Writing for a Canadian audience is certainly on the wish list of these writers. If they know that their readership is Canadian, they will also have some flexibility with the subject matter; as Parameswaran contends, "this direction provides writers with a more meaningful forum; they can write about situations that they would not otherwise expatiate upon, because they are talking to their own kin in their own backyards and not to outsiders who can be shown only the standardized Canadian living room with its four-seat chesterfield and teak dining table that are never used but always kept in showroom condition" ("Ganga" 91).

- Both groups utilize linguistic hybridity but the English language group is clearly more practiced. As discussed in earlier chapters, writers writing in English have been using mixed language for various reasons and for a long time, ever since the tradition started in India in 1930s. Conversely, writers writing in heritage languages have only recently started using English words in their writing and have generally been strict in their adherence to the language. Jay Gajjar's older writing follows Gujarati language quite strictly but his recent writing incorporates English, sometimes to an extent that a non-Gujarati reader could almost understand the majority of the context if he/she could read the script. This experimentation is a result of being aware that the reader is back in India and a belief that English words will make the stories 'sound' more Canadian. Urdu writers are distinct within the heritage language group; they have mostly been strictly faithful to the language, especially the poets. The Urdu poetic tradition is as such very rich and has followed the footsteps of Persian poetry. Given that Urdu poetry uses very complex words and amalgamations of words, there is little scope of trying outside the Urdu language. Also given that Urdu poetry is a huge part of the culture, and the oral tradition (recitations at gatherings), it demands that linguistic fidelity be there. There have been some linguistic experiments in Urdu prose writing but they are minimal.

But when these writers do use English words in their writing there is one important point to be noted. They are easily understood in spite of the break that English words bring. Even those readers who read in Urdu or Gujarati, or Punjabi, or Hindi, do not feel the need for a glossary or explication of English words; to a certain extent English is understood by the majority of these readers, whether they are in India, Pakistan, or Canada. However, for the writer in English, he/she certainly has to make a choice to translate the words, provide a glossary or leave it up to the reader to find the meaning of the non-English terms. Not all readers of these English works are familiar with the South Asian terms that break the flow of English. As explained earlier, this certainly makes it a very conscious exercise for the writer writing in English. Thus audience and reception has much influence on the way he writes. The use of linguistic hybridity, thus, may not always be a matter of choice, but a matter of acceptance.

- Given the reach of the English language, we now have an ample number of critics who are able to value and judge South Asian literary creations in English; these critics from a South Asian background are Arun Mukherjee, Uma Parameswaran, and Surjeet Kalsey, and from a non-South Asian background there are Stephen Slemon, Stella Sandahl, and Ronald Sutherland. Then again, there is a clear need of critics in South Asian languages; while Nuzhat Yar Khan, Surjeet Kalsey, Pragna Thakkar

Enros, Shaheen, and others have provided some useful criticism, there is neither a strong body of critics nor proponents of South Asian language writers. This deficiency certainly adds to the lack of recognition of these writers. As Parameswaran very rightly points out, "alongside creative writing, we need critics who can competently explicate and comment upon what is being produced. We certainly do not need anyone who repeatedly presents papers on Kipling or the Raj" ("Ganga" 85-86). A steady stream of criticism will also pave the way for the writers to be accepted and published. This development will certainly be a slow process but it has to start at some point in order to have any effects.

Towards a New Definition of Canadian Literature

The above comparison shows that South Asian authors writing both in English and in heritage languages have been making a significant contribution to Anglophone Canadian literature and are worthy of critical attention. Thus, I think there is a need for these writers to be included in the canon of that literature, especially those writing in heritage languages as they are the most marginalized. While many reasons have been given for excluding these writers, "the extension of the canon is clearly the first step in the process of integration. It authenticates third-language writing as Canadian, and makes it eligible for critical analysis within the context of Canadian literature and Canadian culture" (Bumsted 19). Arguing the need for "a genuinely multicultural history of the literature of Canada," Batts adds that:

> The practical value of such an approach is two-fold. On the one hand, a recognition of the existence of literature in languages other than English and French, as well as the key role that other languages and other literatures have played in the moulding of our culture, will both deepen and broaden the appreciation of what is uniquely Canadian about our literature in both the past and the present. At the same time, such a recognition and depiction of the multifaceted nature of Canadian literature should do much to promote a sense of Canadianism. (110)

In response to Batts' redefinition of Canadian literature, George Bisztray argues that we need to exercise caution in what we include "since not everything written in Canada qualifies for inclusion in a modern intercultural Canadian literary history," while making sure that ethnic group is not "attempting to assert its presence by juggling with decimal numbers instead of manifesting the best of its true literary traditions" (113).[79] While there can be no denying the fact that literature should be judged by high standards, I argue that that exercise has to start with the recognition of the existence of this literature. It is precisely the kind of arguments that Bisztray makes which has stopped the third language writers from getting any recognition whatsoever. Not everything that is included in English Canadian literary history is the best but the historical importance of such writing has always been recognized; the same standards should be applicable to third-language writing. After all, we can assess the quality of writing only after we accept the quantity of writing. Weeding out bad writing should be the next step not the first step, when it comes to acknowledging literature. Bumsted hoped in 1987 that "Eventually literary studies will appear which regard the presence of such writing as important and even integral to the Canadian experience, and which attempt to deal with it on such terms" (19). Yet, so far this has not happened. No literary journal in Canada currently devotes any specific space to writers writing in non-official languages. It may not be too much to ask literary journals to carry at least a review section that can cover works written in languages other than English and French. And while it may be argued and may seem that this is an overwhelming task, as the number of linguistic groups in Canada is so vast, it is very much a feasible project. After all, our universities now

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[79] Arguing his point, Bisztray cites the example of Hungarian-Canadian literature: "It is not literature par excellence but a bunch of naïve folk poetry, primitive rhymes, and ready-made clichés imported from the low-brow culture of the old country. This body of written civilization may be of high interest and value to ethnohistorians but is an utter embarrassment for people studying or cherishing belle lettres. It was produced among conditions which did not meet the criteria of literary history – criteria which I would summarize as: awareness of aesthetic values; presence of historical consciousness and context; and finally, the institutionalization of literature, that is, the existence of the country-wide "literary life" and network of a certain group. In conclusion to this argument, I believe that we should use some discrimination in defining the beginnings of the literature of the different Canadian cultural groups" (112-13). On the other hand, in support of Batts and citing the example of South Asian Canadian writing, Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri argues that "If we were to accept such a broad definition – as indeed we must – there would be no doubt that the works of literature written by Canadians of South Asian origins, (a) born or raised in Canada, or living their adult lives elsewhere before moving to Canada; (b) writing in English or French and/or a heritage language; (c) writing about mainstream, immigrant,

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or non-Canadian life; (d) reflecting a sensibility that is Western Judeo-Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, or regional; and finally (e) for an intended Canadian or oversees audience – all have to be included under the rubric of "Canadian Literature." Indeed, it is no idle claim that the works of Canadians of South Asian origins alone – and this literature by itself – define and reflect the notion, the structure, and the reality of this broad spectrum of Canadian literature as does no other individual Canadian ethnic group, including the Anglo- Canadian. By the global scope encompassed by this South Asian Canadian literature, every other Canadian-based literature seems diminutive and too particularistic for our proud multicultural reality" ("Comments" 117-18).

have literary critics with knowledge of various languages. A pool of critics with knowledge of different languages may be put together and a certain number of texts can be reviewed in every issue. The pool of critics can expand as the journal finds more critics with knowledge of various different languages. Publishing reviews can certainly be a humble start towards recognizing the contribution of the writers from various linguistic groups. If not, Canadians are losing out on a wealth of literary creativity.

Often the works of these writers have been criticized for not being Canadian enough. But this argument seems to be weak in a multicultural country such as Canada. But then, what is 'authentically Canadian' after all? In this current age of globalization, as Canadians aren't we and shouldn't we be interested in the cultures and traditions of, say, China, Japan, Ireland, Scotland or India, for that matter? The rejection of these writers as Canadian writers because their subject matter does not deal with Canada or because they do not use 'pure English' is unfair. For the proponents of purity, "the reality of the mixed traditions is replaced by the fantasy of purity" (Rushdie 68). After all what matters is

> to be able to appreciate writers for what they are, whether in English or not; we could discuss literature in terms of its real groupings, which may well be national, which may well be linguistic, but which may also be international, and based on imaginative affinities; and as far as Eng. Lit. itself is concerned, I think that if *all* English literatures could be studied together, a shape would emerge which would truly reflect the

> new shape of the language in better shape, because the world language now also possesses a world literature, which is proliferating in every conceivable direction. (Rushdie 70)

The debate of how a writer should write and whether he should use other languages in his writing also has a lot to do with what he is expected to write about. For example, Robertson Davies, in an essay titled "What may Canada expect from its writers?" lists some expectations, the final of which he addresses thus: "Last, we may expect from our writers a true depiction of what our life in Canada is. And of course I speak of the essence of that life, not its externals. That life cannot be described in terms of problems of other countries, for even when we share those problems, they appear in our country as Canadian matters" (258). Davies' expectations are problematic, first, because when one expects anything from a writer, knowingly or unknowingly one limits the freedom of a writer; a writer should not have to write on demand of the audience. Secondly, to say that writing about the "problems of other countries" cannot describe Canadian life is more of a cliché; when many Canadian writers have come from other countries, how can they not write about those countries? Moreover, in a globalized world, how can Canada be naïve to claim that the problems of other countries do not affect Canadians and thus are not a concern for Canadians? Have problems of Afghanistan affected us? Why are our soldiers in Afghanistan? Under the current circumstances, wouldn't it be acceptable to read a work by an Afghan-Canadian writer in order to understand Afghanistan and the Canadian mission in

Afghanistan? To claim that a Canadian writer should write about Canada only is preposterous. When a writer is writing about other countries, he may want to emphasize difference, and language is one way of doing this. By bringing in non-Canadian places in their works, and by experimenting with the language, these writers are in effect creating a new familiarity with the world, and Canadian audiences if anything gain from this new cultural space that our writers create. Within this space are experiences of various countries, communities, and languages. The Canadian reader is consequently enriched in this wonderfully enchanted space.

As for South Asian Canadian writing in heritage languages, literary histories in Canada have not taken any notice of writers writing in Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and other South Asian languages. While each language has a literary tradition of its own, combined they create a large body of literary activity in Canada. While it would be encouraging to give a separate treatment to each linguistic group, literary historians will do a much needed favor to the Canadian literary community by starting to acknowledge this literary activity under the umbrella of South Asian Canadian writing. As Bumsted argues, "To the extent that minority or ethnic writing in third languages can be viewed, [...] in terms of a commentary and response to the majority cultures, not simply thematically, but at the very core of language itself, it may be possible to find a place for such writers in the critical sense as well as in the historical one" (20).

We need to acknowledge that a writer has a right to write in a language he chooses; he may write in hybrid English as "the English language ceased to be the sole possession of the English some time ago" (Rushdie 70) or in heritage languages. He/she, nonetheless, is a part of the Canadian literary community. The question of the definition of Canadian literature and whether the writers writing in non-official languages should even be considered a part of the canon of Canadian literature has been aptly approached by Michael S. Batts who writes:

> But equally it behoves them to take a broad and encompassing view of what constitutes a Canadian writer. It is true that the country is large, the population sparse and at times concentrated in small, isolated communities. But there has never been a time when writers in any language were not open to the influence, not merely of their natural surroundings, but also of the society in which they lived. They are subject here to native, European, and Oriental influences and absorb these through acquaintance with people and with works, whether it be in the latter case through originals, translations, or mere hearsay. In some cases the writer may use more than one language or write predominantly in a language which is not that of his inheritance. I shall not enter here, therefore, into a discussion of what does or does not constitute a Canadian writer for the simple reason that I believe that, given our circumstances, anyone who lives and/or writes and/or publishes in Canada must be accepted. Whether or not Canadians write

> in an official language or in a non-official language, their work is all part of Canadian literature and should be viewed as such, for without it a substantial part is missing, while what is included can not be fully explained. (110)

I believe we need to re-establish this definition. Hart noted in 1988-89 that

> Before World War One, Canadians generally thought that their literature, if it existed, did so only in two languages and they often looked abroad or south for books. Between 1914 and 1960, it seems that Canada was coming of age, so that in the early 1960s, Canadians in greater numbers broke down their resistance to the existence of their own culture and began, individually and as a society (often through government intervention), to support their artists and writers. Today, Canadians are beginning to recognize the importance of native languages and cultures as well as other languages and cultures that comprise Canada. ("In the Mouth of the Canon"145-146)

This "recognition" of other languages can now go a step further. There is a need for further historicizing and appropriating the works in heritage languages, and not merely looking at it as something that people write in a language that we do not understand. As these texts are brought into the Canadian literary world, it will lead to the expansion of the definition of Canadian literature. No matter what language the ethnic minority writer writes in - even when they write in English (or French) - these writers face the question of their Canadianness, and whether their writing is Canadian enough and whether they should at all be included in the canon of Canadian literature. The idea of defining who is a Canadian writer and who belongs to the canon of Canadian literature may seem futile; looking for that definition in the words of Vassanji is "surely an illusion," for "to define this country or its literature seems like putting a finger on Zeno's arrow: no sooner do you think you have done it than it has moved on" ("Am I a Canadian Writer?" 7). However, the effort needs to be made. These writers, despite their choice of language, need to be identified as Canadian writers because they have brought stories from elsewhere and about elsewhere to Canada; they are "the historians and mythmakers; the witnesses" and their "home is Canada, because home is past and the present, as also the future" (Vassanji, "Am I a Canadian Writer?" 11). Vassanji argues that the stories that immigrant writers are telling are those of Canadians:

> we are telling the stories not only of there, but also for people here. We are bringing the stories here to accompany those who have arrived here. They came with their clothes, and sometimes with their pots and pans, and left it on us to bring their stories here. These stories are not only for their consumption; they are not for nostalgia; they are their history, describe their being. And therefore they are for their future generations as well. And that puts a whole new dimension or shade to the question of who we really are . . . If we are telling the stories of so many Canadians, aren't we then

> telling the stories of Canada as well? What kind of Canada? This is not a Canada only of the Mounties and the hockey, the north and the Newfoundland, the beer commercials, into which newcomers assimilate; it is a Canada which constantly adjusts and redefines itself, though in degrees. ("Am I a Canadian Writer?" 11-12)

Vassanji expands the definition of Canadians and thus Canadian literature; he argues:

> The idea that I am putting forward is that new Canadians bring their stories with them, and these stories then become Canadian stories. Canada's past lies not only in the native stories of the land itself, but also in Europe, and now in Africa and Asia; Canadians have fought not only in the World Wars, but also in the wars of liberation of Africa, Asia, and South America. We have veterans and heroes not only of those European wars, but also of wars elsewhere. Our children, however much they sometimes pretend that our past does not matter to them, also demand that. The stories of the Jewish Holocaust, the holocausts in Rwanda, the Partition of India, and the massacres of Cambodia are also Canadian stories. ("Am I a Canadian Writer?" 12)

While our understanding of Canadian literature has expanded in the last decade or two with the inclusion of writers such as Kogawa, Mistry, Paci, and others in the canon of Canadian literature, it needs much more expansion. Taking even a cursory look at some of the latest anthologies of Canadian literature where many writers and also some from ethnic minority backgrounds are included, tells us that there is no section on writers writing in non-official languages; for the editors of these anthologies, either these writers do not exist or they are not worth reading. Either way the loss is that of Canadians. Chelva Kanaganayakam also argues for the inclusion of the immigrant writer in Canadian literature:

> At some level it can be argued that there is little difference from a writer who lives in Ontario and writes about the prairies and one who lives in Toronto and writes about Bombay. Both suffer displacement and rely on memory to create their imaginary worlds. The difference, however, might well be that one still deals with a landscape and context that is identifiably Canadian while the other does not. A response to this would be that the notion of Canadian as it is defined here is narrowly referential and is largely applicable to certain kinds of writing. ("Spattering Dung"163)

Kanaganayakam further argues that writings about other countries have "an allegorical significance for Canada" and that often "there is enough material to justify a latent Canadianness" ("Spattering Dung" 163). National literatures are not created in isolation. To believe that Canadian literature can be defined on the principles of exclusion is mythical. As Hart argues,

> while a nation defines itself and its literature through its own sense of difference, it also does so through a shared experience with other nations and literatures. It was precisely when Canada was redefining its nationality as being more than a composite or the coexistence of French

> or English, and was admitting vast numbers of immigrants from all over the world, that its nationalism grew evident in politics, economic, literature, and other spheres. Nationalism makes and unmakes itself. ("In the Mouth of the Canon" 147)

It is time for Canadian nationalism and Canadian literature to remake itself one more time. The content and language of literature should not be a barrier; writer living in Canada has a right to be called a "Canadian writer." Canadian literature has its discrete identity, and the vernacular tradition of Canadian writing adds to its distinctiveness, making Canadian literature "delightfully instructive and instructively delightful" (Hart, "In the Mouth of the Canon" 147).

CONCLUSION

welcome saqi,

just another glass

and i think i can write this.

just, just one more glass

and the right language

the correct form

will appear;

words will link

into ghazals, into geets or kavitas . . .

Rajinder Pal, *pappaji wrote poetry in a language I cannot read*

Uma Parameswaran hoped in 1985 that Canadian literature would "extend its frontiers and expand its vocabulary in order to accommodate the diversity of our multicultural reality" ("Ganga" 80). This has certainly happened; the Canadian society and literary scene have changed considerably in the past two decades. We have successfully received many writers from various backgrounds. As for the South Asian writers, Anita Rau Badami, Shawna Singh Baldwin, Anosh Irani, Anar Ali, among others, are those who have gained valuable ground in the last decade, while Ondaatje, Mistry, Vassanji, and Parameswaran have made their hold and claim stronger. This progress has certainly aided the Canadian society at large. As Parameswaran fittingly reasons,

> through the development of literary symbols and vocabulary, we can accelerate a cultural synthesis that would otherwise take a much longer time. Or, to put it another way, literature not only reflects persistence and change in society but can lead society into a better appreciation of its multicultural and ethno-centered fabric. ("Ganga" 80)

While commending the efforts of Surjeet Kalsey and the like who have translated some works written in Punjabi in Canada, Parameswaran laments the lack of Canada's attempt at preserving its heritage past and urges to do something more about it. Although written in 1985, Parameswaran's sentiments are still valid since not much has been done in the field after twenty years. I quote her paragraph here in its entirety as I strongly share the same emotions and views:

> Perhaps they and others who know the language and background could direct their efforts to a very important aspect of the Canadian literary scene, namely, the retrieval of early records whether they be in writing, in music, or in the oral medium. It has recently been discovered that the Icelanders who first came to Manitoba in the 1870s had a repertory theatre with local scripts within three years of their arrival. Surely, given the abounding vitality of the tradition of group entertainment, with kawwali and bhangra and katha (storytelling) and satsang (group prayers), there must have been a great deal of theatrical and community activity among the early immigrant, who moreover did not have the modern media of radio and television that dull creative activity. It is vital that the work of retrieval and documentation be done while one still has access to the individuals and family records of those days. It is somewhat ironic that Canada, which scarcely has a history, should be and should have to be so aware of searching and retaining its past. Ethnic studies is one of the fastest growing fields, and those who are interested in the Indo-Canadian heritage should be more active in these endeavours. (“Ganga” 82)

The South Asian Canadian community needs to invest time and resources in preservation of some of the earlier literary and cultural practices in Canada. Also, South Asian scholars should aid this effort. Comparative Literature is well suited for the study of literature in non-official languages, and South Asian scholars in the field should assume the responsibility of translating some of the works. As Bumsted notes, "most Canadian literary criticism ignores writing in third languages, and virtually the only strategy for fitting it into the general practice comes from the perspective of comparative literature" (18). While the school systems have been incorporating second languages, universities have to promote this actively; the Bernheimer Report clearly emphasizes this:

> The knowledge of foreign languages remains fundamental to our raison d'etre. Comparatists have always been people with an exceptional interest in foreign languages, an unusual ability to learn them, and a lively capacity to enjoy using them. These qualities should continue to be cultivated in our students. (43)

In this project I have tried to answer the call of both Parameswaran and Bernheimer and others. By studying the function of heritage languages in the shaping of South Asian Canadian writing, I have shed light on the process of the construction of a discourse which not only replaces the centre but also reconstitutes the language of the majority.

In chapter one, I established a relationship among language, literature, culture, and diaspora. I argued that immigrants in Canada try to retain their distinct culture, language, and identity while being a part of Canadian society. In chapter two, I took a comparative look at the development of the English language in the Indian subcontinent as well as in Canada, and argued that linguistic hybridity is a result of the coming together of various cultures which may either be a result of colonization or diaspora. In chapter three, I introduced different ways by which writers have used heritage languages. Looking at different technical strategies in light of Bakhtin's theory, I determined that South Asian Canadian writers have created a language unique to themselves through various strategies. I contend that the use of neo-English was not an innocent act on part of the writer; rather, linguistic hybridity is a political act which serves the purpose of resistance, cultural retention, and an expression of hybrid identity. In chapter four, I took a detailed look at the vernacular tradition in South Asian Canadian writing and established that writers writing in South Asian languages are a unique group by themselves. These writers have been marginalized, and, I have suggested that attempts be made to study these writers even if it has to be in translation. Finally, in chapter five I have provided a detailed comparison of both the traditions of writing, and have contended that the canon of Canadian literature be redefined to be more inclusive and diverse.

As Blodgett rightly asserts, "all writing that emerges from the minority languages and cultures of Canada constitutes its own solitude, and a history of Canadian culture is perforce a history of many solitudes" (Five 224). South Asian Canadian writing has its own solitude, but the scholarship in the area of South Asian Canadian writing is limited as it has mostly focused on the issues of displacement, identity, gender, and immigration. As for the linguistic aspect, scholarship in Canada has focused exclusively on the debate between French and English. My study is a step towards recognizing the contribution of heritage languages not only within English writing, but also towards creating a parallel literature in heritage languages. While similar studies, albeit on a very small scale, have been undertaken with reference to Italian, Chinese, Hungarian, and Ukrainian writing in Canada, no such study exists for South Asian writing in Canada. This project hopes to have filled that void. I also hope that this project will lead to translations of some of the works mentioned in chapter four and of other works which were not analyzed here due to lack of space. Such translations will aid the literary community at large and will further the cause of Comparative Literature which aims at studying the literatures of various languages in original as well as in translation.

The use of heritage languages within English has at times been looked down upon as an impure form;[80] however, in the post-colonial context and in the multicultural context, such linguistic hybridity is essential to the existence of the decolonized or the 'ethnic' subject and it is imperative to recognize these marginal voices both as important by themselves and as a contributing factor to the national literary scene and to multiculturalism in general. As Jonathan Hart stresses, "the debate on cultural appropriation needs to be encouraged as a sign of freedom rather than as a screaming across the abyss;" the same should apply to linguistic appropriation ("Cultural Appropriation" 140). In this project I have argued that the South Asian Canadian writers writing in English who incorporate various non-English words and grammatical arrangements in their works mark a cultural identity and retention as well as retention of linguistic identity as a means of resistance in an officially bilingual nation.

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[80] As I illustrated earlier with regards to criticism of Mistry's work.

The ethnic minority writer in Canada has a choice between English and heritage languages. Either choice is going to be marked by personal comfort and expertise with the language, and cultural and political ties. Also there are pros and cons of the choice that the writer makes. If he writes in English he can reach a wider audience, as well, he can look forward to recognition both in the 'home' as well as 'host' country and outside of these two countries. On the other hand, if he decides to write in the vernacular language, he is at a disadvantage in terms of an audience in Canada.

My study goes beyond the linguistic analysis of literature and has proposed a theoretical framework for the study of diasporic literature, especially in Canada. I conclude that the choice of language is more than a political exercise for the diaspora writer, and it goes beyond the selection between English and english[81] or English/english and heritage languages. Language is a medium by which these writers promote culture, define individuality and bring forth the complexity of Canadian identity. While my focus has been on South Asian Canadian writing both in English and in heritage languages, I have endeavored to make a more original contribution to the specific debate on diaspora writing in particular and ethnic Canadian writing in general. The implications of my research go beyond South Asian writing and I hope that this will help in understanding the literatures produced in Canada that are in languages other than the two official languages or those that are in hybrid English. Apparently, literature produced in Italian, for example, or Cantonese face the same fate as South Asian languages. I hope that my research will bring forth the literary contribution of heritage languages into the limelight and establish the value of this contribution to the multicultural Canadian society.

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[81] As proposed by Ashcroft et al. in Empire, see p. 7-8.

Some of the approaches in this project may have implications on the study of canon of Canadian literature. While the definition of Canadian literature has continuously been placed under the microscope, there has been little consensus, especially when it comes to literature in non-official languages. This study continues that debate and adds to the dialogue which may be valued in future.

This dissertation serves as an example for an examination of similar practice in cinema studies. A similar research can be undertaken for South Asian diasporic cinema, which again is a reflection of cultural and linguistic hybridity. The fact that Deepa Mehta's Water, which is in Hindi, was Canada's official 2007 Oscar entry would make this research more relevant. Directors such as Gurinder Chadha, Mira Nair, and Deepa Mehta have brought South Asian diasporic cinema to a new level in the last decade. Gurinder Chadha's Bhaji on the Beach and Bend It Like Beckham have drawn global critical attention; Mira Nair's adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake has added a new dimension to South Asian diasporic literature and cinema. Linguistic hybridity in these films is worth studying. I hope that my current project will lead to similar research in the field of cinema studies.

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